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THE NATURE AND RIGHT OF RELIGION

THE NATURE AND RIGHT OF RELIGION

BY

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PREFACE

IN the present volume an attempt is made to determine the essential nature of religion by analysing it into its ultimate factors, objective and subjective, and on the basis of this determination to vindicate its permanent right to be the controlling power in human life. The key to the interpretation is found in values and our feeling for them, such fundamental religious ideas as faith, revelation, and the supernatural, as well as the historical religions, including Christianity, being redefined in terms of this conception. Introduced into theology by Ritschl, the value theory has so far failed to find either a satisfactory formulation or a systematic working out; and it is the writer's hope that he may have contributed something in both these directions. Between the traditional reading of Christianity and that here presented the chief differences are that the idea of the Divine Transcendence is replaced by that of the Divine Immanence, and the speculative element moved from the centre to the periphery, Christian doctrine yielding precedence to Christian values.

To my friend and former colleague, Professor E. F. Scott of Union Seminary, my warmest acknowledgments are due. Revising the proofs is the slightest of his services.

W. MORGAN.

QUEEN'S THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE,
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THE NATURE AND RIGHT OF RELIGION

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS RELIGION?

THAT at this time of day there should still be no general agreement regarding the nature of a phenomenon so immemorial, universal, and intimate as religion may well seem strange. But such is the fact. One has only to pass in review the many definitions that have been offered to realize how wide is the divergence of opinion. The question, What is religion? is still an open one, and there is ample justification for fresh attempts at an answer.

Most of the more recent definitions betray the influence of the comparative method of study which has come into vogue within the last half-century. The use of this method has told in two directions. It has led in the first place to the logical type of definition, a definition in terms of some element or elements presumed to be common to religion in all its varied forms from the rudest to the most spiritual. Two or three examples will show the kind of result which this logical method yields. Religion is "a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man, which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human life" (Frazer). It is "a unified system of beliefs and practices

relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church all those who adhere to them" (Durkheim). It is "the serious and social attitude of individuals and communities towards the power or powers which they conceive as having ultimate control over their interests and destinies," or shorter, "our attitude towards the determiner of destiny" (Pratt). It is "an endeavour to secure the conservation of socially recognized values through a specific and peculiar kind of agency, the attitude towards this agency being of a definite sort" (Wright).

Whether such definitions, general as they are, are general enough to cover all the phenomena that have a solid claim to be included we need not inquire. Granting their logical validity, they are condemned by their insignificance. Whatever other purpose they may serve, they supply little or no clue to the factors which awaken and nourish religion in human hearts, or to the feelings, affirmations, and impulses that constitute it. They tell us, in fact, nothing about it that is worth knowing. Any common element, if such can be found, is too meagre and colourless to be treated as the generic idea which includes all in religion that is essential.

The comparative method of study has also been largely responsible for the widely prevalent view that the key to an understanding of religion is to be found in its origins. Religion, declares Durkheim, is most profitably studied not in its ideal forms—there its true nature is veiled—but in those that are rudest and most primitive. And the French scholar builds his own theory on an investigation of the totemistic beliefs and practices of the Australian aborigines. No one, of course, will deny that primitive religion has its own historical interest,

and that it may throw a valuable light on religion higher up the scale. But it is quite another thing to seek in it the secret of the higher faith itself. That is about as wise and hopeful an enterprise as to search for the soul of music in the strains of the tomtom. In studying religion we must proceed on the Aristotelean principle that the nature of a thing is to be discovered not in its rude beginnings, but in its completed form. And only when we scrutinize the lower from the vantage-ground of the higher are we able to distinguish between what is genuinely religious and what is merely rudimentary science or rudimentary morality.

By this principle all the greatest thinkers who have dealt with religion have been governed. Taking religion at its highest, they have sought to track it to its spring. Where they have usually erred is in assuming that it can have only one spring. As we shall see, it is too complex a phenomenon to permit of such reduction. Religion is more than the recognition of our duties as divine commands (Kant), or than the consciousness of absolute dependence (Schleiermacher), or than the knowledge acquired by the finite spirit of its essence as absolute (Hegel), or than the feeling appreciative of value (Lotze), or than faith in the conservation of values (Hoeffding). Vital as these aspects undoubtedly are, there is not one of them that is exhaustive, nor perhaps all of them taken together. Unity is good, but we must not in our search for it do violence to the complexity of the facts.

To add another definition to the many already in the field is no part of our design. Our task is the prior one of analysis. Manifestly religion is determined in part by our human situation, the environment in which our lives are set. There is something not ourselves through contact with which it is evoked. What is this reality

in which we meet with God, and what are the characters which give it its power to move us? Then there is the subjective side of religion, what we call religious experience, and of this, too, we must give some account. When we know religion in the factors that awaken it, and the inner emotions, affirmations, desires, and impulses which constitute it, we may claim to understand what it essentially is.

1. We begin with what is most elementary. That we are held in the grasp of a stupendous reality which every moment of our life affects us for good or for ill, forwarding or frustrating our hopes and plans, is no hypothesis and no matter of faith, but a self-evident fact which we cannot escape. Without our asking, this reality launches us into being, and at an hour when we think not it breaks in on our plans and schemes to change our countenance and send us away. Such is our human situation, and it makes upon us certain very definite impressions. First and foremost it awakens within us the sense of dependence. Savage man is acutely sensible that his safety and his food supply are not mainly in his own but in other hands, and that he is exposed to a thousand mischances. It is this consciousness that lies at the basis of all his religious actions. He will so act that the powers on which he knows himself dependent shall not hurt but if possible help him. In the case of civilized man it might seem as if the situation were materially altered. Has he not learned to control the forces of nature and to harness them to his chariot? But notwithstanding some measure of mastery, our ultimate relation to the great encompassing universe is what it has always been, one of absolute dependence. Custom may indeed dull our sense of the fact, but some crisis in our life or even a quite hour of reflection is sufficient to bring it

surging in upon us. There are certain circumstances in which religion resolves itself into just this elementary mood. "The soldier's God," writes an officer in a paper on trench religion, "is once more the God of battles, who clothes Himself with the storm. He is not the Judge of right and wrong, not the Friend of the fatherless and the widow's Protector, not holy or just or good, but simply the Controller of all the forces of nature which burst from the little grasp of man: the Lord of Fate and the Master of Life and Death."

But the feeling of dependence, though central, is not the only emotion excited by the besetting reality which holds us in its grasp. Closely akin to it is the feeling of our human insignificance and creatureliness. Our poor, frail lives shrivel into nothingness at the thought of the eternities and immensities amid which we stand. "What shadows we are and what shadows we pursue," said Burke on hearing of the sudden death of a political opponent. And from Job, when the tremendous works of the Creator were made to pass before him, were wrung the words, "Behold I am vile! What shall I answer thee?" Among the elementary religious emotions we may also number wonder and admiration, fear deepening into awe, hope, and joy. Finally, there is the sense of mystery, the sense of the unfathomable. We are confronted by something that baffles our understanding, the secret of which we cannot penetrate. Advancing knowledge, so far from dissipating this feeling, serves only to make it more profound.

The view here adopted that what elicits the religious response is the world standing over against us in its unthinkable vastness, its eternity, and its mystery is challenged by an important school of anthropologists of which Durkheim is the acknowledged leader. Accord-

ing to Durkheim the primary object of religious veneration is not the world, but the society of which the individual is a member. A society, he maintains, possesses all the properties necessary to arouse in its members the sensation of the Divine. It is to them what a god is to his worshippers. It exercises over them an authority at once physical and moral, constraining obedience, and subjects them to privation and sacrifice in its interests. As the creator of morality and civilization it is the source of all the inspirations that lift the individual above himself. Towards society the individual stands in a relation of absolute dependence. A religion is nothing else than " a system of ideas with which individuals represent to themselves the society of which they are members and the relations they have with it." And if there is something eternal in religion, it is because there is no society which does not feel the need of upholding and reaffirming at regular intervals the collective sentiments and ideas, which make its unity and personality.[1]

As a proof of his thesis Durkheim offers us a genetic interpretation of the totemistic religion of the lowest race of which we have any knowledge—the aborigines of the Australian continent. That the ostensible object of savage worship was not, as a matter of fact, the clan, but spirits and natural objects, he does not dispute. But he attempts to save his theory by a series of ingenious if far from convincing explanations. Primitive man, he tells us, had no capacity for scientific analysis. The influences which really emanated from the clan he mistakenly located in the visible objects about him. It was in this way that the totem animal or plant, which was at first only the emblem or flag of the clan, came to be

[1] *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, p. 224.

credited with marvellous powers. And when in addition the sentiments which the clan inspired in its members extended themselves contagiously to the clan-emblem this emblem acquired the character of a sacred object. And the sanctity thus gained by the totem was still further extended to anything closely or remotely connected with it. The wind and the rain, the sun, moon, and stars received a religious character from the fact that they were classified according to a totemistic system, which in turn reflected the relation of the tribal subgroups to the whole tribe. What was really expressed in the notion of a supreme god was tribal unity; and the advance from polytheism to monotheism but mirrored the sense of a racial unity transcending that of the clan and the nation.

It is easy to see that this theory of religion is not so much derived from the facts as imposed upon them at the prompting of the author's Positivist philosophy. Religion, as ordinarily understood, Durkheim, like his master Comte, rejects, regarding it as nothing better than naïve and outgrown science, or a long discredited expedient for controlling the course of nature. And with Comte he appropriates the time-honoured name for a cult of the group, the nation or, wider still, humanity. No one who does not share his philosophy is likely to be convinced by his argument that the worship rendered throughout the ages to the Power that rules the universe has been due to a ratiocinative blunder.

What Durkheim says about the religious significance of the society of which we are members is not indeed without an element of truth. Unquestionably it is in the social domain that we come into touch with those spiritual values and forces that supply to our thought of the Divine its highest content. Apart from a society,

justice, mercy, truth, and love could have no existence. What, however, has to be noted is that for religion such values are never merely "the spirit of the group," but always the spirit of the eternal Power on whom the individual and the group are alike dependent. As we shall see presently, this linking of the spiritual with the cosmical is a cardinal feature of all the higher religions, and rests on something more solid than ignorance of social psychology.

2. While the feelings of dependence, creatureliness, mystery, wonder, awe, are primary elements in the religious response to our world environment, they in no case constitute the whole of it. Equally primary is the element of interpretation. Man frames some conception of the nature of the cosmic power or powers with which he has to reckon. Without this a religious praxis would be impossible; and, as we shall see, there are religious emotions the character of which the interpretation directly determines.

Primitive man's outlook on the world, as will be shown more fully in the succeeding chapter, can be summed up in three beliefs—the belief in nature spirits, in ghosts, and in a magic force of marvellous potency. Such was his interpretation of the superhuman powers that impinged on his life with favourable or disastrous effect. Knowing their nature, he was in a position to relate himself to them in such a way that they should not hurt, but if possible help, him. He placated them with an offering of food or drink, prayed to them, flattered them, threatened them, or in the case of the magic force he made use of incantations, spells, and rites to manipulate it to his advantage.

In such an interpretation there is nothing distinctively religious. Rather must it be regarded, if not as the

rude beginnings of science, at least as its equivalent in a pre-scientific age. With the rise of genuine science it was bound to disappear, and in all civilized communities it has long since disappeared. And with it has vanished the whole apparatus of the primitive cult. Serums and the like have displaced exorcism as a curative agent, and scientific agriculture, sun, rain, and fertility charms.

Not a few maintain that all interpretations of the world from the side of religion belong to the same category and must go the same road. Even in their most spiritual form they represent nothing more than an animistic way of looking at things. As a mode of feeling religion may survive, but as an instrument of knowledge its days are numbered, science having occupied the field.

But is there not, we ask, a knowledge of the world that is rooted in religion itself, a knowledge different in its nature and in its basis from that supplied by science? Before we proceed to pronounce on the validity of such knowledge the fact of its existence must first be established. The primitive outlook being such as we have seen, it will be hopeless to look for it there. Only in the higher religions does it come clearly into view, and most clearly in the highest of all. We turn first to the Hebrew prophets.

The most outstanding thing about the Hebrew prophets is their intense passion for righteousness. Righteousness is for them the greatest thing in the world, and unrighteousness the direst evil—indeed, the source of every real evil. And what we have to note is that this moral passion governs their interpretation of the world. The Hebrew prophets proclaim the law of righteousness to be the supreme law of the universe, and set justice, mercy, and faithfulness at the heart of things. "Thy loving-kindness, O Lord, is in the heavens; thy

faithfulness reacheth unto the skies. Thy righteousness is like the mountains of God; thy judgments are a great deep. How precious is thy loving-kindness, O God, and the children of men take refuge under the shadow of thy wings." "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne, mercy and truth shall go before thy face." The principle on which the prophets proceed is unmistakable. They interpret the world in terms of those values that have approved themselves to them as the highest. Rightly or wrongly, they take their stand there.

In Jesus' teaching about God the same principle is visibly operative. The justice, mercy, generosity, and self-forgetting, serving love, which seemed to Him the greatest things in the world He establishes in the very heavens. "If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" Were another illustration needed, one might find it in the teaching of Zoroaster, whose conception of the universe is manifestly a direct result of his feeling for the moral.

Brahmanism may seem at first sight to contradict the principle we have enunciated. A system in which a man like Gautama was nurtured can hardly be accused of a lack of feeling for the moral. And yet in its scheme of things the moral has no central place. If in its doctrine of Karma it recognizes some sort of moral order, it has to be remembered that the world in which the law of Karma rules is not the real, but an inferior, if not illusory, world from which men need to be delivered. In the real world the moral is transcended: Brahma has no moral attributes, but is beyond good and evil. One might easily conclude that with the framing of this

conception the feeling for values could have had nothing whatever to do. This, however, would be a mistake. The conception is not without its value aspect. Of Brahma it is affirmed that He is one, simple, changeless, passionless, enduring, and for ever blessed. And for the Upanishad thinkers these qualities are values, nay, in their contrast with the multiplicity, complexity, transience, and restless, bootless striving characteristic of phenomenal existence, the highest conceivable values. How they were led to such a valuation we do not here inquire; enough that it governed their interpretation of the world.

What is the precise nature of the impulse which has so consistently moved the religious mind to set the highest that it knows at the centre of being? This much at least must be assumed, an intense feeling for the ideal values—truth, beauty, and goodness. Without a deep appreciation of the morally good, to confine ourselves to that, there would be no motive for establishing it on the throne of the universe. And so it is that progress in religion has uniformly gone hand in hand with progress in morality, and that the great religious pioneers—Zoroaster, the Hebrew prophets, Jesus—have been men of profound moral feeling. We are familiar enough with a religion that is divorced from morality, but we do not rate it very high. We know that until a man's conscience has been awakened nothing worthy of the name of religion is possible. The radically profane person is not the intellectual doubter; he is the man who, with no eye for anything but what is vulgar and common, rides over life's sanctities rough-shod, or, like Esau, is ready to sell them for a morsel of meat. Where shall we look for the root of spiritual religion if not in the perception and realization that in this life of ours there are things

so sacred—justice, honour, truth, love—that to maintain and guard them no sacrifice can be too great?

So vital is the part that moral feeling plays in religion that not a few have refused to acknowledge any real difference between the two. "The essence of religion," writes John Stuart Mill, "is the strong and earnest direction of the emotions and desires towards an ideal object, recognized as of the highest excellence, and as rightfully paramount over all selfish objects of desire." Many present-day writers follow the same line. The reference to the Power on which we hang, the reference to God, is treated as inessential, and religion defined as the consciousness of the highest social values, social service, and the like.

It is no disparagement of social service or of morality in general to say that it does not by itself amount to religion, although it may be, and often has been, accepted as a substitute for it. Morality first receives a religious colour when it is brought into connection with the ultimately real, and treated as normative not only for us but for the universe. As Hoeffding rightly maintains, "it is this relation between value and reality that constitutes the religious sphere, in distinction from science, which is concerned only with realities, and from ethics, which is concerned only with values."[1] Kant takes the same position when he defines religion as the recognition of our duties as Divine commands.

But the question how our feeling for values should lead us to connect them with ultimate reality and to interpret the world through them still awaits an answer. Hoeffding, in his book just cited, advances a theory which has attracted wide attention. "Religion," he writes, "grows out of the basal mood of man in his struggle for

[1] *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 243.

life, out of the resolution to hold fast under all circumstances to the validity of that which he has learned from experience to be of the highest value. It is faith in the conservation of values." This, however, is not all. "Existence," he continues, "is a battlefield in which the fate of values is being decided; and it is far from exhibiting itself as their assured home. Religious feeling presupposes a striving that has to encounter opposition. We are sensible that the causal order tramples over our values rough-shod, and affords us no guarantee of their persistence as an element in the cosmos. But, despite this, our wish that values be preserved maintains itself, and the religious need consists just in the desire to hold fast to the conservation of values beyond the limits which experience exhibits, and in spite of all the transformations which experience reveals. And so there arises the presentiment that the principle of the world of values is in the end identical with the principle of causal connection within existence. For religion, God is the principle of the conservation of values through all oscillations and all struggles." Practically the same view is expounded by the late Professor Foster of Chicago in his book, *The Function of Religion in Man's Struggle for Existence*. Religion, he declares, is "the conviction of the achievability of universally valid satisfactions of the human personality."

With not a little in Hoeffding's theory, which shows real insight into the working of the religious spirit, we find ourselves in cordial agreement. Where we part company with him is in his description of the religious impulse as essentially a desire that values be preserved. Such an account of it is inexact and inadequate. Influenced by his agnostic philosophy, he avoids making religion responsible for any direct assertion regarding

the nature of central being. Religion is permitted to make no greater demand on the universe than that it be such that through all the mutations of time a valuable kernel of existence shall persist. And to the conception of God as the principle at once of the world of causally related facts and the world of values, no validity is conceded beyond that of a symbolical expression for the feelings, aspirations, and wishes of man in his struggle for existence.

The question is one of psychological analysis, and we venture to assert that the religious impulse, as it functions in men of living piety, moves to the assertion of a far more direct connection between the world of facts and the world of values than the Danish thinker admits. Behind the belief in the conservation of values there lies something more fundamental—the conviction, namely, that the world of values stands on a higher plane of being than the world of facts, and has the right to prescribe for the latter its end and its law. On the ground of their superior worth, their superior rank in the scale of being, religion establishes rationality, beauty, and goodness at the centre of things, and reduces the mechanism of nature to the position of a means to an end. Discriminating between what has value and what in itself has none, it interprets the world from the standpoint of the first. Of this impulse Plato had more than an inkling. " No man," he writes in *The Laws*, " can be secure in his religion who does not possess these two things. He must know that the soul is the oldest thing in creation, and is immortal, and has precedence of all bodies ; and he must know that the mind of things is in the stars, and have all necessary knowledge leading up to that." What is this but an assertion that religion rests on a discrimination of values, and a projection of the highest into the centre of being ?

This account of the religious interpretation of the world differs in some important respects from that given by Ritschl. "The religious view of the world in all its species," says Ritschl, "rests on the fact that man in some degree distinguishes himself in worth from the phenomena which surround him and from the influences of nature which press in upon him. All religion is equivalent to an explanation of the course of the world—to whatever extent it may be known—in the sense that the sublime spiritual power (or the spiritual powers), which rule in or over it, conserve or confirm to the personal spirit its claims and its independence over against the restrictions of nature and the natural effects of human society." [1]

It will be observed that the reality whose superiority to the processes of nature is affirmed is for Ritschl the personal spirit with its claim to moral freedom. In this conception of it he is influenced by Kant, who saw in moral freedom the noumenal or supernatural element in man's being. But the conception is too narrow. While the kingdom of values doubtless includes freedom as an essential constituent, it is incapable of being completely defined in terms of freedom. As it presents itself to the religious imagination, it is something larger and more concrete, embracing all our human values, with the ideal as central.

And there is another and more serious objection to which Ritschl's formulation lies open. As has often been urged, it introduces God as if He were a postulate rather than a direct experience. Our direct relation is to our own spiritual personality with its consciousness of freedom and worth, and if we have resort to God it is because this consciousness can maintain itself in the

[1] *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 17.

face of the restrictions of the natural world only if we assume the existence of a sublime spiritual power ruling in or over the world. God thus appears in the light of a *Helfs-vorstellung* or expedient. Here also we can trace the influence of Kant, who postulated the idea of God as a metaphysical guarantee for the supremacy of the moral order over the phenomenal world and its laws.

It is in no such indirect fashion that the sense of God enters the human soul. God meets us directly in the reality amid which we stand. Of that reality the causal mechanism forms an aspect which we are never suffered to forget. But our feeling for values reveals another and higher aspect no less authentic, the domain of rationality, beauty, and goodness—all that we mean by Spirit—and in this higher aspect, just because it is higher, we greet the innermost soul and meaning of things, the manifestation of the living God who uses the laws and forces of nature as His instruments. For what is God but the reality on which we depend, the ultimate might in the universe, interpreted through the highest that has come within our experience ?

In that feeling for the ideal values, therefore, which establishes them as normative, not only for our own life and conduct, but also for the cosmos, we find the second of the great springs and motives of religion. It is religion's spiritual root, as the sense of an encompassing Power on which we depend is its natural root. It is nothing else than what we call faith. Rightly understood, faith is something very different from belief on authority or from a balancing of probabilities ; it is trust in the rational, the beautiful, and the good as the ultimate reality and might in the universe, the eternal yea of our soul to the highest that has met us in the field of our experience.

How radically a religion predominantly on the natural plane is transformed when taken possession of and penetrated by the principle of faith, let the history of Hebrew Yahwism tell. No aspect is left unaffected. The elementary emotions—the sense of dependence, creature-feeling, wonder, fear, hope, the sense of mystery—take on a new colour, when the world that awakens them is a world that has a righteous and gracious God at the heart of it, and that everywhere reveals His presence and working. And to these are added other emotions scarcely at all represented on religion's lower levels, such as adoration, love, peace, the sense of security, and a joy deeper than that of the harvest. Equally far reaching is the transformation to which the cultus is subjected. The whole ritual apparatus for securing the favour of the Deity and propitiating Him when angry disappears or tends to disappear, and the cultus becomes a means for the expression of religious feeling and for the cultivation of the religious disposition. Righteousness takes the place of ritual as the true service of God. Altered, too, is the character of prayer. More and more prayer ceases to be used as a magic spell or a means of securing material benefits, and becomes a cry for redemption and an intercourse of man with his Maker.

We have treated belief in God as an act of faith springing from our feeling for values. In his *Varieties of Religious Experience*, James seems to regard it as the product of a "mystical" intuition. From the examples he gives of this intuition we take the following: "The perfect stillness of the night was thrilled by a more solemn silence. The darkness held a presence that was all the more felt because it was not seen. I could not any more have doubted that *He* was there than that I was. Indeed, I felt myself to be, if possible, the less real

of the two." [1] Something similar is recorded by George Fox in his journal. "One morning," he writes, "as I was sitting by the fire, a great cloud came over me." It was the suggestion, he explains, that all things come by nature, and that there is no God behind nature. "And as I sat still under it alone, a living hope arose in me and a true voice which said, 'There is a living God which made all things.' And immediately the cloud and the temptation vanished away, and life rose over it all; my heart was glad, and I praised the living God." By Otto, Pratt, and others such experiences are regarded as the hall-mark of mysticism. Ordinary or non-mystical religion, Pratt contends, rests on a belief in God which is the product of some rational process; while the mystic has a sense or feeling of the Divine presence which is of the nature of an immediate and intuitive experience, this experience being "a quick, glad sense that God is near, accompanied by a deep peace and gladness." [2]

The reality of this vivid sense of the Divine presence no one will question. It is not, however, peculiar to mysticism, but occurs as an occasional experience in piety of every type. Practically every one for whom religion is a reality can recall moments when he could say, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee." Nor does the experience represent a mode of apprehending God different from that of faith. It is not, in fact, an apprehending at all; for whatever qualities "the presence" may possess are not given in it, but are reproduced from the man's ordinary way of thinking about God. It is nothing more than a vivid *realization*, in some cases accompanied by automatisms, that the God of our faith is in very truth near

[1] P. 90. [2] *The Religious Consciousness*, p. 337 ff.

to us and as real as our own existence. From the many testimonies borne by religious people to this so-called mystic consciousness of God, James tries to get some kind of a theology. Can these testimonies, he asks, be dismissed as baseless? Must we not conclude that "the presence" was there, even if on the ordinary levels of life we are not sensible of it? A right understanding of the experience shows the illegitimacy of the appeal. Besides, the attempt to get a theology out of psychology is surely an idle one.

We have said that the sense of a presence is not peculiar to mysticism. What, then, are the distinctive features of this much discussed type of piety? At least in its classical form—as represented by the Indian, Persian, Hellenistic, and mediæval Christian mystics—it rests on the assumption that the Divine in its essential nature is to be found not in the world but beyond it. In other words, God is conceived as absolutely transcendent, absolutely different from all reality accessible to our reason or our conscience. He is the One, the changeless unity as opposed to the manifoldness of created things. Tauler speaks of Him as the Divine abyss and again as the Divine darkness. Obviously the approach to such a being must lie along the path of world renunciation and negation. Only by leaving the world behind can we meet with God. The discipline—morality, meditation, abstraction, the suppression of the consciousness of selfhood—through which the soul progressively detaches itself from created things, constitutes the stages of the mystic way and leads up to the culminating experience. The suppression of selfhood points to a second feature of mysticism equally cardinal with the idea of the Divine transcendence. God is conceived pantheistically, human and Divine personality both disappearing. Plotinus

tells how, when the soul, possessed by an intense love of the One, has left the world behind and divested itself of all form, the One suddenly appears with nothing between, and in a rapture of feeling all consciousness of separate selfhood is submerged. The following is Tauler's description of the ecstatic vision: "The Kingdom is seated in the inmost recesses of the spirit. When, through all manner of exercises, the outward man has been converted into the inward man, and the powers of the senses and of the reason are gathered up into the very centre of the man's being—the unseen depths of the spirit wherein lies the image of God—and thus he flings himself into the Divine abyss, in which he dwelt eternally before he was created; then when God thus finds the man firmly down and turned towards Him, the Godhead bends and nakedly descends into the depths of the pure waiting soul, drawing it up into the uncreated essence, so that the spirit becomes one with Him."

What is it that the mystic really apprehends in this rapture? The truth is that his vision has no content whatever beyond a vague conception of a formless infinite. So much and only so much remains after he has thought away from the world every concrete character. To name this formless infinite God is an abuse of language. The profundity of the mystic vision, before which so many modern writers have uncovered their heads, is only a sham profundity. Not through abstraction and world-negation can we draw near to the living God, but only through our feeling for values.

That the culminating experience of mysticism lies in a region beyond good and evil does not mean that the great mystics were indifferent to moral considerations. Not infrequently they insist that a moral duty like ministering to a beggar must take precedence of the

rapture in which the union with God is consummated. Much of their piety is just ordinary ethical piety. This, however, has to be said that in the mystic scheme morality is treated as no more than a preparatory discipline, a stage in the mystic way which is left behind when the soul comes face to face with God and loses itself in Him.

Before carrying our investigation further, let us recall what we have so far reached. Religion has its natural basis in the consciousness of an infinite, eternal, and mysterious reality on which we are in the last resort absolutely dependent. And spiritual religion begins with the interpretation of that reality in terms of the highest we know. What leads to the interpretation is our feeling for values and our discrimination between those that are higher and those that are lower. Confronted by the highest values, we know that we are face to face with the Divine, with what gives to the stupendous universe its meaning and its law. And one may add that a deepening experience of God in large measure consists in a deepening experience of values. As we live in the love that cherishes the good and forgets self in the service of others, we more and more live in God. There is no other way to God than this way of faith. The intuitive apprehension of "a presence," on which James laid so much stress, is emphatically not another way, nor is the mystic vision.

But our task is not yet ended. There are at least two other elements in religion that may claim to be regarded as independent and irreducible. The first is the longing for and the experience of redemption, and the second the longing for and the experience of Divine fellowship. These two impulses make up no small part of that thirst for God of which the Psalmist speaks.

3. Although religion was from the first a practical matter, primitive man resorting to superhuman powers for practical reasons, it was not until late in its history that the idea of redemption emerged. This idea presupposes a relatively high stage of spiritual culture. It presupposes, for one thing, that the centre of religious interest has shifted from material goods to spiritual; and, further, that men have reached the point of measuring human life by an ideal held steadily before them. Only when an ideal has seized upon the mind do men come to realize the magnitude of their need, and that it cannot be met by this or that particular deliverance or boon, but demands something like a new creation. Only then do they understand that redemption is too great a thing to be self-achieved.

How redemption is conceived depends on various factors, but always the chief factor is to be found in the character of the valuations on which the particular religion is based. A glance at the Brahmanistic and Christian conceptions may make this clear.

Brahmanism, as we have seen, condemns the empirical world, the world of our earthly experience, as worthless and illusory, recognizing in it no values—not its majestic order nor its haunting beauty nor even the morally good—genuine enough to be ranked as eternal and absolute. And the pessimism of this outlook is deepened by its doctrine of Karma, which dooms every living creature to a never-ending series of reincarnations. What kind of redemption consorts with such a conception of things will at once be evident. On its negative side it is a deliverance from personal existence and from the world in which the law of Karma rules. Positively it signifies absorption in Brahma, the one reality. That the drop disappears in the parent ocean is not, however,

regarded as annihilation, but as untroubled and unending bliss.

In the *Upanishads* redemption is represented as a man's own achievement. Through knowledge of the illusory character of phenomenal and personal existence and of the sole reality of Brahma and through various disciplines and exercises, he frees himself from desire, and thus killing action at its source emancipates himself from the law of Karma and becomes one with Brahma. In Brahmanism we have a religion so worn down, partly by the predominance of the speculative element, that the distinctively religious is reduced to a minimum. In the system of Gautama the wearing-down process is carried a stage further. The positive and religious aspect of redemption—union with Brahma—disappears, leaving only its negative aspect—deliverance from the burden of personal existence.

The history of both these systems shows how signally they failed to meet the religious need. On the soil of Brahmanism various schools of thought sprang up in which Brahma was viewed as a personal being and the helper of the human soul in its search for deliverance. It was in connection with this theistic movement that the idea of divine avatars or incarnations found an entrance into Indian religion. By means of this idea the Deity was brought still closer to his worshippers as helper and saviour, and became an object of personal trust and devotion. An analogous movement, inspired by the same religious motives, led in wide circles to a transformation of primitive Buddhism, Gautama's practical atheism being to some extent overcome by the conception of Bodhisattvas or divine helpers. While the Bodhisattvas are not, properly speaking, gods, they are equipped with divine powers, and in pity stretch out

a helping hand to those who call on them. A religion of redemption cannot permanently dispense with the idea of a God who is a redeemer.

In Christianity also there is a pessimistic vein—Schopenhauer hailed it with delight—taken over from Jewish Apocalyptic and from Hellenistic religion, a vein which is not without effect on its doctrine of redemption. The created world, though reflecting something of the glory of its Creator, is nevertheless regarded as an inferior domain, lying under the curse of mortality and doomed to destruction. From it man needs to be delivered. But this pessimism, unlike that of India, never strikes at the great values which give to the world and to our life in it their meaning. In the Kingdom of the good, Christian faith sees something of eternal and cosmic significance. And this feeling for the ethical, which is the greatest thing in Christianity, determines not only its conception of God and the world, but also its conception of redemption.

The Christian redemption is first and foremost a redemption from moral evil and alienation from the holy God into righteousness and Divine fellowship. Jeremiah could think of nothing greater that God could do for men than to write His law on their hearts, so that all should know Him and do His will from their own spontaneous impulse. And it was the same consummation that was before the eyes of Jesus and His Apostles. The question whether it was thought of as brought about catastrophically or by a gradual process of development, and whether the scene of its realization was our earth or a transcendent world, does not affect the fundamentally ethical character of the conception.

Even the thought of redemption from death and from the world has in Christianity a strongly ethical colour.

If death is regarded as an evil, "the last enemy to be destroyed," it is far less because of our instinctive revulsion from it than because it seems to extend the law of the fading leaf and the withering grass to a realm of values that claims to be eternal. The man who has known something of what it is to live for the good, who has cultivated a personal communion with God and has the vision of a still larger life and closer fellowship, cannot easily reconcile himself to the idea that his experience and his hope must suffer the same fate as the things of the natural order. And if in the New Testament there are passages which treat redemption from the world as deliverance from an environment hopelessly if not inherently evil, there are other passages which present it in the light of a conquest of the world by the might of faith. He who can see behind the world of pleasure, pride, and covetousness another world which is the true country of the soul, the world of the beatitudes, can, as the late Principal Denney said, accept much with which he was once at war because he is inwardly independent of it. And further, through his trust in a God who holds the forces of nature in His hand, he can so bear himself under the buffeting of circumstances as to prove himself their master and not their slave, making them the ministers of his highest good.

4. The last of the cardinal religious impulses is that which leads man to seek fellowship with his Maker. We turn to God not only because we need His help, but also from a certain social instinct, the thirst for Him being in part a thirst for companionship. A world indifferent to all we hold dear, with no principle at the heart of it higher than blind necessity, would be no home for us, but a place of banishment. If we can rejoice in the world with a joy beyond that which comes from

eating and drinking, it is because we are able to discover in it something akin to us, with which we can sympathize, to which we can respond, the depths within answering to the depths without.

Intercourse with God can be regarded under three aspects—as intellectual, as æsthetic, and as moral—all of them having an independent worth, although they do not all stand on the same level of importance.

It is an authentic communion with the Divine which the scientist experiences when, in contemplating the world's marvellous order or in tracking its secrets, he is touched by the feeling that he is in contact with an infinite mind and rethinking its thoughts. If this aspect of communion is far from prominent in Scripture, it is not unrepresented. "Wonderful are thy works," we read in the 139th Psalm, "and that my soul knoweth right well. My frame was not hidden from thee when I was made in secret and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see mine imperfect substance, and in thy book were all my members written, which day by day were fashioned when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts to me, O God, how great is the sum of them." The greatest scientists and thinkers have in their investigations been thus haunted by the sense of God. When, as unhappily sometimes happens, the pursuit of knowledge enfeebles or extinguishes religious feeling, it is from the superficial and utterly vain idea that all in the universe that excites our wonder and admiration is capable of reduction to a meaningless play of mechanical forces.

Closely akin to the communion mediated by the rational is that mediated by the beautiful. A feeling for the manifold charm of the world, loving sympathy

with its inexhaustibly rich and varied life, is not perhaps in itself religious; but it becomes so when suffused with the consciousness that what everywhere meets us is the infinite and eternal glory and life that pulsates at the heart of things. This æsthetic piety has found in the world's literature ample and magnificent expression. In the Old Testament we think of the 104th Psalm, that great nature hymn:

"Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment;
Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:
Who maketh the clouds his chariot;
Who walketh upon the wings of the wind.
He appointeth the moon for seasons;
The sun knoweth his going down.
Thou makest darkness, and it is night;
Wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.
The young lions roar after their prey,
And seek their meat from God.
The sun arises, they get them away,
And lay them down in their dens.
Man goeth forth unto his work
And to his labour until the evening."

The same emotional appreciation of nature's life and beauty permeates the poetry of the Romantic Movement as reflected in Goethe, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Emerson, though here nature is regarded from the pantheistic rather than from the theistic standpoint. More recently Tagore has reproduced its note with something in it of India:

"The morning light has flooded my eyes,
This is Thy message to my heart.
Thy face is bent from above,
Thy eyes look down on my eyes,
And my heart has touched Thy feet."

The intellectual and æsthetic aspects of Divine communion have their own independent right and value,

and add to the largeness and richness of religious experience. But they are not the highest or the deepest aspects. To our moral fellowship with God there belong a seriousness, an intensity, and a practical significance that set it by itself. It is marked also by a peculiar intimacy ; for it involves the idea that in turning to God we turn to One who is a personal Being and who bends towards us. In a piety that is merely intellectual and æsthetic, the thought of God as a Person in whose eyes our souls are precious may perhaps be dispensed with, but certainly not here.

That the moral fellowship is wide as human life, any study of the literature of devotion or even of the Hebrew Psalms will show. What it means is that our life in its tasks and duties, its achievements and failures, its hopes and fears, and in all its circumstances, glad or painful, is taken up into the light of our faith. We seek to realize that the moral law which commands our conscience is the law of God, that the spirit of truth and loyalty and love and service which moves us is His Holy Spirit, and that in accomplishing our appointed tasks we are co-workers with Him. Wrong feeling, thinking, and doing are recognized as sin against God, carrying with it estrangement. And what is the sense of forgiveness but the inner assurance that the God who knows and condemns our sin refuses to give us up ? It is the restoring of fellowship after its interruption by sin. The idea of a remission of penalty does not touch the heart of the matter. Finally, Divine communion means the realization that, even in an environment against which we naturally rebel, God reigns, that there is no power which can separate us from His love, and that the hardest circumstances may, through the might of our faith, become the ministers of His grace. Prayer has as

its chief aspect just such an intercourse of man with God as we have tried to describe.

Religion on its subjective side can be described as an experience of God. The phrase is often used, but mostly with much vagueness. Our analysis may help to give it a more definite meaning.

Of an experience of God the most elementary constituent is the sense of a besetting reality, stupendous and unfathomable, which holds us in its grasp and beside which we are as nothing. In itself this experience, which constitutes what we call natural religion, does not amount to much; but it is never left behind, and it forms the nucleus round which all that follows is organized.

We touch a higher level when, arrested by the wonder and charm of the palpitating life that is all about us, the majesty and infinitude of the world's order, or the world's haunting beauty, we have the sense of an encompassing Life or Mind or Spirit moving behind all that we see and know, which, eternally creative, appeals to us and speaks to us in a way we can understand.

Highest of all is the experience of God in the domain of moral reality. Confronted by the morally great, as an order, a law, and, above all, as a spirit incarnated in a personality, our hearts are subdued as by the Supreme, and we know that it is God who is revealing Himself to us, calling us, and laying upon us His strong hand. So men felt and still feel in the presence of Jesus; and in calling Jesus Divine, our deepest meaning is that in Him we have made experience of God Himself.

But moral reality is found within the soul as well as without, and there is an experience of God as an indwelling spirit and might. When we exercise the love

that forgets self in the service of others, the royal generosity that gives with no thought of return, when we put our foot upon the neck of rebellious passions, we can say with the Apostle Paul that it is God or Christ or the Holy Spirit—the three terms mean one and the self-same thing—who is present and active, and that at such moments God and the soul are one. Of all experiences of God, that is the most intimate; and we can say with a certain truth that God reveals Himself without that He may dwell within. Somewhat similar in its character is the experience of inner liberation or redemption, reconciliation after estrangement, and companionship in feeling, thought, and will.

While God in the soul is the goal of religion, this does not mean that the mystics were right in teaching that to find God we must retire into the depths of our soul. In the case of most of us, introspection reveals little that is edifying. The great moral realities that awaken the sense of God are met not within but without, in the march of history, and in the supreme personalities of our race—above all, in Jesus. For the evangelical counsel to look not to self but to Jesus, there is solid support in religious psychology.

CHAPTER II

RELIGION IN EVOLUTION

IN the marvellous story of evolution there are three separate chapters. The first, limiting itself to the domain of the inorganic, tells of the process by which out of a cloud of nebulous matter, such as can still be seen in Orion and other constellations, there came into being the sidereal and within it the solar system. Following the fortunes of our earth, it describes the results of its gradual cooling in the formation of a hard crust surrounding the molten interior, the condensation of the vapour in its atmosphere, and the crinkling of its crust into mountain and valley, with the consequent distribution of land and water. We are brought to a period when the earth had reached a condition in which it could become the habitation of living organisms.

With the appearance of life on our earth the second chapter opens. How the living sprang from the lifeless, the organic from the inorganic, is a problem that is unsolved and perhaps insoluble. Attempts have been made to synthetize in the laboratory a speck of protoplasm, but always they have ended in failure. Regarding the origin of life, evolutionary science has nothing to say; but given this mysterious entity in its most rudimentary form, that of a single cell, like the amœba and slime fungi, science, with the help of the geological record, can trace, and in some slight measure explain,

its gradual development into ever more complex and more highly integrated forms, until at last in the human species biological evolution finds its culmination.

The third and last chapter has to do with the evolution of civilization and culture. Here it is only man that comes into account; for no animal tribe has anything to show resembling even remotely our human achievement. Civilization and culture in the strict meaning of the terms, as opposed to barbarism, are of comparatively recent origin—perhaps not more than six or seven thousand years old; but, taken in a wider sense, their history stretches back into the immemorial past; for man in the most primitive state of which we have any knowledge has already developed articulate speech, learned to kindle a fire and fashion rude tools, and acquired something that can be called religion. A distinction must be drawn between civilization and culture. Civilization has to do with human life on its political and material side; its story is that of growth in the matters of social organization, division of labour, and the conquest of nature to man's service. Culture, on the other hand, relates to human life on its spiritual side. Man is not content to spend his strength in the pursuit of values that are merely utilitarian and hedonistic, but presses forward to a life which moves in the ideal domain of the true, the beautiful, and the good. While these two departments or aspects of life are fairly distinct, they are related in the closest way, and neither develops in independence of the other. As we shall see in a little, it is with the material aspect that religion in its earlier phases is almost exclusively concerned. But in its later and higher phases religion is a thing of the spirit, a form of human culture, and, indeed, that form in which culture finds its culmination and crown.

As an integral part of human life religion must develop as life develops. It must grow with the growth of knowledge and still more with the growth of morality. We are not, however, wholly dependent on this general consideration for our proof that religion comes under the sweep of evolution. We can appeal to history. Not one of the higher religions but can be traced back to rude enough beginnings. Christianity sprang from Judaism, Judaism from the Hebrew prophetic movement, and this movement from the national cult of Yahweh. Nay, without going outside the witness of the Old Testament, we can reach back to a still earlier stage. In the Old Testament there are numerous religious elements which are patently survivals from a time when Israel's religion was on the primitive level. Such are the food and other taboos of the Levitical code, the furnishing of meat and drink for the consumption of the god, the traces of bull and serpent worship, and the belief in sacred springs, trees, stones, and places. In all religions, survivals from a stage that has been transcended are a familiar phenomenon; they are not absent even in the Christianity of to-day; and they point to lowly beginnings and a long history.

That the story of religion is in the main one of development from lower to higher is not to be taken as meaning that every form of religion carries within it a seed or principle which renders development inevitable. Everything goes to show that the religion of existing savage tribes has remained for many thousands of years practically unchanged. It can be described as stagnant. And there are religions higher up the scale—Islam, for example—to which the same adjective can be applied. Not only may there be stagnancy; there may also be retrogression. Zoroastrianism and Taoism were purer at

their source than farther down the stream. The truth is that there is only one religion—that which had its origin in Israel—the history of which has exhibited steady if not uninterrupted advance, and which has kept step with, or led, the march of culture. It is an interesting question why the others did not show, or have not shown, themselves capable of treading a similar path.

In some cases failure can be traced to inherent poverty in pregnant constituents. The Baal worship which contested the field with Hebrew Yahwism was a mere fertility cult, and had not in it, as its rival had, the ethical stuff out of which anything worthy could be made. To Greek Olympianism, although in a lesser degree, the same weakness attached. Olympianism, as Gilbert Murray remarks, failed to effect in the primitive religion which it supplanted any genuine intellectual and moral purgation. The attempt to make it a religion for the Polis or city-state was therefore a failure ; and men like Æschylus, Socrates, and Plato did not seriously try to transform it so as to make it the medium of their loftier conceptions.[1]

Sometimes, again, a religion has taken a wrong direction and found itself in a blind alley. Indian Vedism may stand as an example. Certain elements of high promise it unquestionably possessed. Varuna, one of its chief gods, appears as consistently righteous and gracious ; and it had the splendid conception of Rita or divine law as the power that governs the world. Unfortunately the subsequent development did not attach itself to these ethical features, but first of all to its sacrificial system, and then, as a reaction from this, to a metaphysical monism in which all the values of the empirical world are rejected as worthless. In Brahman-

[1] *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 87.

ism the Divine or ultimately real has no moral character, but stands at the most for passionless, effortless, changeless contemplative thought. When Gautama appeared, with his profound human sympathy and his fine sensibility for the morally good, he found no Deity who could stand as the source and guardian of the things he really admired ; and we get the strange paradox of a religion without a God, and a high morality, the ultimate goal of which is its own extinction. The path which Vedic religion took thus led into mere desert sand ; although it has to be added that there have been Hindu movements tending in a more hopeful direction.

Still other circumstances that have halted the development of religions might be mentioned. In China there was for long a stagnant culture, and this meant a stagnant religion. If Zoroastrianism failed to fulfil its high promise, it was in part at least because the great Iranian prophet found no line of successors of sufficient capacity, earnestness, and faith to continue and complete his work. One reason why Platonism and Stoicism never appealed to more than a cultured minority was that the religious element in them was overshadowed by the speculative.

It would be of material assistance in understanding the course of religious development were we able to classify the phenomena in a way that would exhibit them as an ascending series. And many such classifications are in the field. Of the old division into false and true religions, or into natural and supernatural, it is unnecessary to speak, since it has been abandoned by practically all scientific students. Proceeding on scientific lines, Tiele gives two main groups, namely, nature religions—founded on the relation of man to the powers of nature—and ethical religions. The group of nature

religions is divided into four sub-groups, and that of ethical religions into two—the national-nomistic and the universalistic. In the scheme proposed by Bousset there are three main groups—the religion of savage peoples, national religions, and prophetic religions ; and the prophetic religions, *i.e.* those founded by great prophetic personalities, are split up into the nomistic religions and the religions of redemption.

But to-day classifications are at a discount, the difficulties in the way of any well-defined system being generally regarded as insurmountable. Nowhere, it is urged, can sharp lines be drawn, and often it is hard to decide in which division a particular religion ought to find its place. While these objections are of undeniable force, and forbid us to treat a classification of religions as on the same level of definiteness with those of zoology and botany, they do not seem decisive. Between the two schemes given, as well as between others that might be quoted, there is a large measure of agreement, although the terminology may differ. At least one line of division is fairly clear, that, namely, between nature religions on the one hand and ethical or prophetic religions on the other. This scheme we shall adopt, with some change in the matter of titles, considering later how far subdivision is practicable. We shall speak of natural religions and faith religions.

1. Under the first of these two classes, which represent two stages of development, there fall the religion of preliterate races, and also, with reservations, Bousset's intermediate group of national religions. In describing such religion as natural, we mean to indicate that it ministers mainly and usually exclusively to man's natural as opposed to his spiritual needs and desires, is concerned with the natural as distinguished from the spiritual forces

that impinge on man's life, and springs up, as it were, spontaneously from the soil without the instrumentality of the great prophetic personalities that play so decisive a part in the genesis of the second group.

All religion is at bottom a practical affair, and that of preliterate races is practical in the narrowest sense of the term. It has to do with man's elementary needs—the need for food, for safety, and for prowess in hunting, fighting, and making love. Something in the way of providing for these needs the savage can accomplish by his own unaided efforts. In cultivating his patch he can choose the proper time for tilling, sowing, and reaping. He can acquire some knowledge of the habits of his quarry, and learn to use such weapons as he possesses with precision. He can select his cave at a spot where floods are unlikely to reach it In love-making there are natural arts, the efficacy of which were early discovered. All such knowledge and capacity, all such happenings, primitive man treats as belonging to the domain, not of the sacred, but of the profane.

In coping with his environment there is a certain range within which early man feels himself master, and has no impulse to look beyond his human powers. But how insignificant is that range? On all hands he is confronted by the incalculable and uncontrollable. The same labour and skill bestowed on his corn-patch yield in different years very different results. One year timely sun and shower conspire to produce an abundant harvest; another, and the crop is parched, drowned, or destroyed by insect pests. Disaster may descend on the tribe from lightning, flood, or human enemies; and disease and death are always lying in wait. It is out of this situation that primitive religion arises. Religion has as its natural basis the sense of

dependence on superhuman forces in coping with which human capacity is in the last resort helpless. When early man comes to the limit of his power he has recourse to religion.

In order to operate in a religious way on the superhuman or extrahuman forces that affect his life for good and for evil, early man must frame some conception of their nature. If, therefore, we would understand his religion, we must know not only his situation but also his outlook. The study of savage mentality, begun by Tyler in his epoch-making book on Primitive Culture, has in recent years been vigorously pursued both in Europe and in America. Some writers speak of a prelogical stage of human thought ; but this the facts hardly justify. One can, however, legitimately speak of a pre-scientific stage. While early man was familiar with certain natural sequences, of the real causal connection of events, the real nature of the forces working around him, he had no knowledge that can be called scientific. How, then, did the world mirror itself in his mind ? Interpreting it after the human analogy, he credited not only animals but also inanimate objects—mountains, rivers, trees, stones, the heavenly bodies—with thoughts, feelings, and volitions like those he found within himself. The animals were his kinsmen—often his superiors—and could talk. One remembers the talking snake of the Genesis story. The Red Indian believed that magicians were to be found among animals as among men. When the savage fell into a pool, he thought of the water as deliberately trying to suck him down. Trees spoke, sang, and gave oracles, and when wounded they bled.

Two stages in this manner of thinking are usually distinguished. In the earlier no separation was made between the object and its soul or life ; but in process of

time the idea was reached that the soul is so far distinct from the body it inhabits that it can abandon one abode and seek another. The first stage is known as animatism ; the second as animism. To the remote days of the animistic outlook belong the fairy tales in which man appears as on a level with plants and animals, and which take us into a strange, fantastic world where anything may happen. The myth, too, has its source in a somewhat similar outlook, representing as it does pre-scientific thinking about the things and problems that attracted the interest of our distant ancestors. Animism also enables us to understand how a stock or a stone, an animal or an element, could be treated as a kind of god. Had it not its own feelings which had to be carefully considered, since it was able to help and to hurt ?

Among the powers with which our poor harassed ancestors had to reckon we must also number ghosts. The idea that death means the annihilation of the soul or self is one that never occurred to uncivilized man. When a man died he left his body and became a ghost ; and the ghost, if it did not find itself tolerably comfortable in the grave which was henceforward its abode, might return to plague the living. Among some tribes we meet with the idea that a ghost might enter into a pregnant woman to find a new body and a new terrestrial life, an idea which was developed in India and elsewhere into the doctrine of metempsychosis.

In addition to spirits and ghosts, primitive man recognized a third power of hardly less importance. It was that of a magic force of wonderful potency, which among the Polynesians goes by the now familiar name of *mana*, and among the North American Indians of *orenda* or *waconda*. How precisely this force was conceived is still a subject of dispute. It is something with

which certain persons, animals, and objects are charged as with an electric current ; and it can be set in motion by spells, incantations, and rites. Chiefs, rain-doctors, ghosts, and totems have mana ; and there are various ways in which the ordinary man can acquire it. Its presence endows with extraordinary powers, such as the power to rule, to shoot straight, to procure rain and fertility, and to stir up thunder and hurricanes.

These three conceptions—spirits, ghosts, mana—are not in themselves religions ; rather are they the product of pre-scientific philosophic activity. In the higher religions there is a knowledge or interpretation of the world that is rooted in religion itself ; but on the level with which we are dealing, such knowledge hardly comes into account. Primitive religion is based on the idea of a world in which spirits, ghosts, and mana are the active powers ; and it consists, so far as practice is concerned, in so placating or manipulating these powers as that they shall not be man's foes, but, if possible, his friends. In giving some brief indication of the nature of early religious practice, we shall deal first with the practices related predominantly to the ghost and spirit ideas, and then with those related predominantly to the magic idea. This must not, however, be taken as meaning that in the savage mind the two are regarded as separate. Many anthropologists, and among them Sir James Frazer, have argued that magical rites have no title to be called religious, but must be treated rather as the primitive equivalent for science. But this position is finding less and less support. Mana, no less than ghosts and spirits, figures as a superhuman power in the world-environment to which savage man tries to adjust himself. And often it is hard to decide whether a sacred object owes its character to the presence of a spirit or

of the magic force, and whether a prayer, for example, is efficacious as an appeal or as a spell. All that can be admitted is that with the advance of religion the magical element tends to fall under suspicion.

Once the soul had quitted the body, early man had no wish to see it return as a ghost. To guard against this contingency the corpse was carried out of the hut through a hole knocked in the wall and subsequently built up. And every effort was made to secure that the ghost should have no reason for serious dissatisfaction with its situation. The dead hunter was provided with his bow and arrows, the fisher with his hooks, and the warrior with his weapons. Clothes were added to keep the ghost warm, and an extra suit for a change. Food was not forgotten. Of a darker complexion was the custom of sending some of the dead chief's wives and slaves to the grave along with him. In the *Iliad* we read of twelve captive Trojans as having been slain at the funeral rites of Patroclus. The Indian institution of Suttee had its origin in the purpose that in the underworld the dead man should not be without the comfort of a wife. Of necessity the dead were in process of time forgotten, but even so, some provision was made for them. In Persia, Greece, and Rome there was held in spring an all-souls' festival for the entertainment of the Nameless Crowd. In the calendar of the Catholic Church that festival has still a place. Its popular name is Hallowe'en.

What were the motives behind these attentions paid to the dead? Affection and respect were not perhaps inoperative, but far more powerful were hope and fear. A friendly ghost might do one a good turn, and a disgruntled one had power to make his displeasure felt. Sometimes ghosts were called up from their subterranean abode and consulted as oracles (necromancy).

Turning to the cult of spirits, we begin with that of spirits of vegetarian origin. The Homeric hymn to Demeter tells the story of Demeter and her daughter Persephone. One day the fair and youthful Persephone was gathering flowers in a meadow, when Pluto, lord of the dead, issuing from the abyss, seized and carried her off to the underworld to be his bride and queen. Indignant at the loss of her daughter, Demeter withdrew from the company of the gods, and brought to a standstill all the processes of vegetation. Mankind would soon have perished had not Zeus compelled Pluto to disgorge his prey. Unwilling to lose his bride permanently, Pluto, before she ascended to the light, made her eat of the fruit of the pomegranate to ensure her return. But with the help of Zeus an agreement was reached. Two-thirds of the year Persephone would spend with her mother in the upper world and one-third with Pluto in the lower. Joyfully Demeter received her daughter from the Shades; and the earth, the curse removed, was once more covered with verdure. What we have in this myth is a pre-scientific explanation of the vegetation cycle of winter and spring, death and resurrection, Demeter and Persephone being vegetation spirits. Of Attis and Cybele, Osiris and Isis, Adonis and Astarte, somewhat similar stories were told. Always there was the death and resurrection of a divinity, the reflection of what happened in the world of nature. And the stories formed the basis of regularly recurring agricultural rites and festivals. In late autumn the country folk met to mourn with loud lamentations the death of the deity, and with equally loud jubilations they celebrated his return to life in spring. These outbursts were not merely sympathetic; they had as their chief motive to influence in a favourable way the process of growth, to ensure that vegetation would revive and

with vigour. There were also prayers and offerings. Demeter was invoked and propitiated by the Greek farmers before the various operations of the agricultural year. So also the Hebrews presented the first-fruits of their farms to the Baalim from whom they received the corn, the wine, and the oil.

In the Hellenistic age the festival of a dying and rising god was still celebrated, but with a new motive. Interest in the vegetation cycle had yielded place to interest in personal immortality. Through mystic union with the saviour-god the worshipper died with him to his mortal life, and was reborn into a life new and deathless.

Vegetation spirits were not, of course, the only ones propitiated. In the India of Vedic times the main objects of worship were the spirits or gods of the great elemental powers—Indra, the thunderer, who hurled his lightning at the demons who withheld the rain from the parched earth; Varuna, the sky god; and Agni, the god of fire. To these divinities, whose power to harm and help was self-evident, prayers were addressed and offerings made. Butter, milk, and grain were poured on the sacred fires, animals were killed, and invigorating soma set out in cups, while the priests recited portions of the Vedic hymns, inviting the gods to the sacrifice and seeking their favour and aid.

In many primitive rites and practices the magic idea is unmistakably in evidence. According to Frazer, the earliest chiefs or kings owed their position to the belief that they were endowed with mana and therefore able to control the weather, conduct a successful campaign, and render other services useful to the tribe. Their magical character secured for them a species of veneration—they can be described as man-gods—and also surrounded them and even their possessions with a wall of fear which

contributed much to their safety. For the magic force is not to be rashly approached; it can injure or even kill a man. Any object in which it is present is taboo —sacred, dangerous, and to be handled with as much discretion as one handles a live wire. A Maori who ignorantly ate the remnants of a chief's meal, on learning what he had done, took ill and died.

When, as in totemism, animals bore a sacred character, it was in some cases at least because they were regarded as charged with mana. Though taboo for ordinary use, a sacred animal might be eaten by the tribe on special occasions at a solemn meal, its mana being in this realistic fashion appropriated. We can, therefore, speak of such meals as sacramental.

At a higher stage of early culture there were sacred meals in which the partaker was brought into relation, not with mana, but with a spirit or god. Sometimes the idea was that of communion, the god being thought of as presiding at the table. But there were also meals at which the god was eaten. At the festival of Dionysus, a bull, in which the god was supposed to be present, was torn to pieces and its blood-dripping fragments devoured raw. The celebrants, believing themselves to be possessed by the god, conducted themselves in orgiastic fashion. It hardly needs to be pointed out that in a spiritualized form these ideas reappear in the Christian sacrament.

To return to the magic force, this force could be set in motion by spells and rites. By the use of spells the weather-doctor brought down the needed shower. The same means were employed to put compulsion on archons and gods. Magic formulas designed for this purpose are among the most prominent contents of the surviving documents that reflect religion in its primitive phases.

Among the rites whose action was conceived as magical mention may be made of those employed by the farmer to strengthen or control the factors on which fertility was supposed to depend. If rain was needed, its patter was imitated by a rattle, or its appearance by squirting water into the air. It was believed that the rain must follow suit. To ensure a supply of sunshine the natives of New Caledonia kindled a fire, chanting the refrain, "O sun, I do this that you may burn hot and devour all the mists of heaven." In some parts of Scotland the midsummer fire is still lit, although its original meaning as a sun charm has long been forgotten. The custom of greeting the rising sun with dances and clash of instruments had the same purpose of reinforcing its vigour by magic means. A third factor in fertility is the mysterious generative power resident in the seed and the soil; and this, too, early man sought to reinforce. The sexual orgies so often associated with primitive religious rites had, in some cases at least, their origin in the idea that they helped the seed to sprout and the flock to multiply. A less objectionable practice was to plant in the plot of grain a green branch or to scatter over it the ashes of a pregnant animal that had been killed and burned. The generative virtue of the branch or the animal would somehow act on the seed and the soil. It is probable that the still surviving custom of scattering rice over a newly married couple was in its origin a fecundity charm.

In giving these illustrations of the character of religion on the primitive level we have made no attempt to arrange them in an evolutionary order. Attempts in this direction are, however, common enough. Many contend that the animistic stage of thought, long regarded as primeval, was preceded by a mana stage, and

that before men began to conciliate spirits and gods they sought to control their world-environment by the practice of magic. At first there were no spirits or gods, only mana ; and mana was the stuff out of which spirits and gods were fabricated. Durkheim, who treats the tribe itself as the real object of primitive worship, places totemism at the beginning. Andrew Lang and others, on the ground of the belief in a being who made the world, lives in heaven and does injury to no one, found among many savage peoples—the Australian aborigines call him Daramulun—have tried to make out a case for a primitive monotheism. But such hypothetical reconstructions are being increasingly received with scepticism. To the beginning of religion our knowledge does not reach. Nor are we in a position to establish among the phenomena known to us any single line of development. Animism and magic, fetishism, totemism, ghost worship, and element worship may all be equally primitive.

What can, however, be said is that with the growth of culture the earlier phenomena experience a gradual transformation, some elements disappearing or retiring into the background and new elements coming into prominence. And the growth of culture is associated in the closest way with the advance of the tribe from a nomadic to a settled mode of life, and, above all, with the rise of the nation.

The amalgamation, by conquest or otherwise, of a number of tribes into a nation, as in the Nile valley and the Babylonian plain, marks one of the great epochs in the history of the race. Life and property become more secure, and the arts of peace gain a place beside the art of war. Division of labour, rendered possible and necessary by the larger population, leads to an increase

of wealth. Industry and commerce expand, bringing contact with other peoples. Considerable cities are built, and imposing public monuments like the Egyptian temples and pyramids erected. A feeling for the national history awakens, and the memory of the heroes and exploits of the past becomes a common possession, knitting more closely the tie of citizenship. With the introduction of a chronology and the invention of some kind of script annals are preserved. There is an enlargement of the sphere of government, the central authority taking over functions formerly exercised by the individual. It is no longer the clan or the kinsman who exacts punishment for the murder of a member, but the courts of justice. The idea of law as something more than mere custom or the arbitrary will of a ruler emerges, and codes are formulated like that of Hammurabi or the Latin Tables. Life is enriched by a crowd of interests—political, social, intellectual, artistic, and moral—which in tribal days existed only in mere germ. And all this is not without its effect on religion.

It was probably among tribes that had ceased their wanderings and built towns and villages that the first notable step in religious advance was taken. From the indefinite crowd of half-differentiated, evanescent, and nameless ghosts and nature spirits of the earlier days there emerged a limited number of fairly definite superhuman figures with a name and sometimes an image. Each town or district came to have its own particular god, or god and goddess, who watched over its varied interests and from whom help was sought in all emergencies. These local cults still persisted after the tribes had been merged in a nation, and were the main source of the polytheism which was so characteristic a feature of most national religions. "Thus the Babylonian sea-

port town Eridu was the place of worship of the idol Ea, the town of Nipur of Bel, the town of Ur of the moon god Sin. The sun was especially worshipped in Sippar, Marduk in Babylon, Nebo in Borsippa." [1] Similarly the great Egyptian deities were originally local deities.

The many gods of the national religions were not all on the same level. Naturally the god of the dominant town or tribe attained to a position of superiority and became the national god. Under him the others were ranged. "Just as, one after another, the towns of Memphis, Heliopolis, and Thebes gained the mastery, so in the same order Ptah, Ra, and Ammon obtained precedence among the Egyptian gods. With the rise of Babylon, Marduk, the hitherto entirely insignificant local divinity of Babylon, rose to be the most important god in the Babylonian Pantheon; with the rise of Athens, Athene became the chief goddess of the Greeks, and Apollo stepped into great power as the protecting deity of the Delian confederation." A certain order was also introduced among the crowd of gods by a distribution of functions. One was a god of agriculture, another a war god, another a god of wisdom; one had the sea for his realm, and another the underworld. The Latins in particular, in their Indigitamenta, carried the idea of departmental divinities almost to the point of a *reductio ad absurdum*.

A development still more far reaching in its effects than that we have mentioned was the gradual detachment of the gods from the nature ground from which they had sprung. The material functions with which they had originally to do fell into the background, and new functions of a totally different kind were assigned to

[1] Bousset, *Das Wesen der Religion*, Eng. trans. p. 72, from whom I have borrowed freely in this section.

them. The Vedic Indra, originally a thunder god who swept through the heavens in his chariot to hurl his lightnings at the demons who withheld from the parched earth the quickening showers, became in course of time a war god, the helper of his people in battle, and also sat as judge to avenge evil deeds. So also Ahura the Persian sky god was transformed into the god of civilization, in whose service man tends the herds, rises from a nomadic life to a settled, builds roads, makes bridges, founds towns, wages war against barbaric hordes, destroys wild and harmful animals, and practises faithfulness and truth towards his neighbours. The Egyptian sun god Re experienced a somewhat similar transformation. His primitive function was to break up the clouds and drive away the storm; but with the development of the state he became an ancient Egyptian sovereign who had ascended to heaven, the present ruler of the nation—the king was his son by an earthly mother—the determiner of human destiny, and supreme over all gods. Such divinities had naturally a proper name, for they were no longer mere nature powers or Baals, but distinct personalities, with what we can call ethos, or character.

A striking result of this gradual loosening of the gods from their nature ground and their association with cultural values is seen in the change of form under which they were conceived. The majority, if not all, of the earlier gods were theriomorphic. Among those of Egypt, Khnum of Elephantine was a ram, Hathor a cow, Nekhhebt a vulture, Bast a cat, Horus a falcon, Anubis a jackal, Sebek a crocodile, and Thoth an ibis. Only one or two were of human form. In Israel Yahwe was worshipped under the form of a bull. Later we find hybrid forms. The goddess Isis had the head of a cow on a human trunk, Horus the head of a falcon, Typhon

that of an ass, and so on. In the Babylon and Greece of historic times the connection between the god and the animal was still further loosened. The Babylonian gods were pictured as riding or driving the animals by which they were once represented; and those of Greece as having them for their associates—the eagle of Zeus, the owl of Athene, the dove of Aphrodite. With the higher conception of the gods that had come with advancing culture an animal form was irreconcilable.

The number of national gods, although considerable, was still limited. What became of the multitude of spirits and minor divinities inherited from the remote past? Some, no doubt, were forgotten; but in most cases they were degraded to the rank of demons. Gods and demons were sharply distinguished. Demons were feared and hated, but they were not worshipped as the gods were. If sacrifices were offered to them, it was to keep them quiet and at a distance. Intercourse with them was regarded as illicit, and often punished as a crime. And ghosts in the more advanced civilizations lost their terrors. The dead went to the land of shades never to return, and could neither help nor hurt the living. Where offerings were still brought to them, as in China, these were regarded by the educated at least as a mark of filial piety rather than as propitiatory.

At its best, national religion touches a fairly high level. In many cases its great gods appear as the authors and guardians of civilization and culture. They stand for some kind of moral world-order—a world-order which in Egypt and elsewhere penetrated to the realm of the dead, subjecting the dead to a judgment which sent them to bliss or misery, partly at least according as the deeds they had done in the body were good or bad. It may be remarked that the Indian conceptions of Rita and Karma

and the Chinese conception of Heaven (Tien) stand for a cosmic order which has no personal power behind it. And though it is only rarely, as in the case of the Indian Varuna, that the gods are represented as consistently righteous, they yet embody, notwithstanding their savageries and frailties—Zeus had many love affairs, and Indra was quarrelsome and sometimes took more soma than was good for him—traits which their worshippers could admire. We can speak of worship in some real sense, of a lifting up of the heart to what is not merely materially but intellectually and morally great. In an Egyptian tractate we find this remarkable utterance: "Do justice for the sake of the Lord of justice, even Thoth, who is far from doing evil. For justice is for eternity. It descends with him that doeth it into the grave. His name is not effaced on earth: he is remembered because of good." The following prayer of Nebuchadnezzar is on the same high level: "Set my heart in the face of thy godhead; grant me what thou deemest best; for thou it is who hast created my life. . . . May I rule as King according to thy wish; let me not in my pride lose my knowledge of thee, for it is thou who hast chosen me out. O Marduk, great Lord, let me behold thy godhead; let me attain my heart's desire; set righteousness on my lips and grace in my heart."

National religion is, however, far from being all on this plane. Not even the best of the gods are completely ethicized, and many of them remain frankly barbaric. Even Yahwe in preprophetic Israel has his unaccountable moods, can kill a man who incautiously touches his ark, and can order atrocious massacres. And in no national religion is there any attempt to revise the whole conception of religion and of worship from the ideal or spiritual standpoint. The material and the

spiritual, the moral and the non-moral, or even the immoral, stand side by side without, apparently, exciting any feeling of incongruity. If it is recognized that the gods take pleasure in justice and mercy, they are supposed to be equally pleased with meat offerings and drink offerings, and with the blood of bulls and of goats. Indeed, it is the latter kind of sacrifice that is in general treated as the altogether indispensable one. While there is a feeling for the ethical, no clear distinction is drawn between the ethical and the ceremonial or ritual. Nor has the ethical completely detached itself from the customary and attained to the position of an independent interest. Sometimes a national god occupies in the pantheon a position so unique that we seem to be on the verge of monotheism. But the appearance is deceptive. In no national religion is the natural bond between the god and his people, or the god and his land, replaced by an ethical one. The god belongs to his people and must stand with them against all hostile powers, as much as the people belongs to the god. For a man to change his citizenship is to change his god. However wide his power, the national god is not in any real sense the god of the whole earth. And provided his sovereignty is acknowledged, he is not usually jealous of minor divinities. Paganism is hospitable, and for the reason that it is lacking in the earnestness—some will call it intolerance—that is sensitive to incongruous elements and determined to expel them.

In the centuries round the beginning of the Christian era there flourished in the Græco-Roman world a series of kindred religions which in many respects marked an advance on national religion, but hardly deserve to be included in the highest group. They are known as the Hellenistic mystery cults, and have attracted much

attention in recent years owing to the undeniable influence they exercised in shaping the Christian sacraments and, to a less extent, Christian doctrine and piety. As already indicated, they have as their basis one myth or another of a saviour-god who, having died and returned to life, offers to his worshippers, through a mystical union with him in his experiences, a blessed immortality. Only two points regarding these cults need be noted here. Unlike the national religions, and in common with those of faith, they are individualistic. A man is not born into them, but initiated. Religion becomes a matter of personal conviction, and transcends national, racial, and caste distinctions. It makes its appeal to man not as a member of a state, but as an individual, and offers him an individual good.

The second point relates to the spiritual level of the cults. That they were morally superior to national religion at its best, it would be hazardous to assert. While the patron divinities are worshipped as moral beings, they hardly represent the moral ideal; and union with them signifies little more than a process of divinizing or immortalizing. The individual immortality which is offered is hardly in itself a moral good, and it may easily be a selfish one.

2. From natural religion we turn to the religions of faith. In giving to the highest group this title we do not, of course, mean that in them faith for the first times comes into view. Faith in the sense of such a feeling for the ideal values—rationality, beauty, and goodness—as moves us to set them, not merely at the centre of our own life as the supreme objects of pursuit, but at the centre of the great universe, subjecting to them the whole fabric of the material world as medium and instrument—faith in this sense has been operative

wherever throughout the history of religion we find some impulse to interpret the universe in terms of the ideal. Naturally it is not possible to put our finger on the spot when this impulse first began to stir. What, however, we can say is that it is not till we reach the highest group that faith becomes the controlling factor and that there is some real attempt to recast religion in harmony with it. We can, therefore, speak of the higher religions as religions of faith in a sense which does not obtain in the case of those already reviewed.

The rise of faith religions was possible only when the rational, the beautiful, and, above all, the morally good had extricated themselves from tradition and custom and attained to the position of an independent interest—nay, the supreme interest in life. Such a position they certainly do not occupy among the mass of men to-day. And there was never a time when they did. Only of the few in any age can it be said that the springs of their life lie wholly or mainly in the ideal. The faith religions were no product of mass movements, although mass movements may have conditioned their appearance. One and all, they owed their existence to great prophetic personalities—men in whom the fire of the ideal burned with intense and steady flame. The higher Indian religions had their source in the Upanishad thinkers and Gautama, the religion of the Old Testament in the Hebrew prophets, Zoroastrianism in Zoroaster, Christianity in Jesus, and Islam in Mohammed. Because of this origin these religions are sometimes described as prophetic and again as founded. Their origin explains the fact that they do not mirror average thought and morality, but set an ideal towards which the ordinary man has to strive, with many failures and backslidings.

Another feature of the faith religions is their in-

dividualism. It is no longer the clan or the nation, but the individual that is the religious unit. The individual is set solitary before ultimate reality to decide his attitude towards it and to shape his own destiny. Religion has become a matter of personal conviction and choice. Individualism does not necessarily mean that the end sought is a merely private one; it may well be social in the largest sense. Christianity and Buddhism have been social forces of immense potency.

The faith religions are also monotheistic. This follows from the fact that the world is interpreted from the standpoint of the ideal. There can be only one rational order, one moral order. The rational and the moral alike demand ultimate unity.

Finally, the faith religions can be described as in principle at least universal. Their appeal is to human nature as such, and to human nature on its spiritual side.

Not all the religions mentioned as belonging to the highest class exhibit these features in their purity and fullness. It is, for example, only in a very limited sense that we can speak of Mohammedanism as rooted in faith; and in its sacred stone and its pilgrimage to Mecca it has elements that are irreconcilable with a universal appeal. In deciding the class to which a particular religion belongs we must judge it by its general character.

How are the faith religions related to one another? Can we subdivide them, or perhaps arrange them in a serial order? One profound distinction there is which no one can miss, that between Oriental religion—Brahmanism and Buddhism—on the one hand, and Christianity and its congeners on the other.

What gives to Christianity its peculiar stamp is its radically ethical character. Christianity interprets life and interprets the universe in terms of the highest ethical

values. While it does not fail to recognize the right of rationality and beauty, it is, above all, justice and mercy and love and truth that it establishes at the heart of being. It affirms all genuine values, giving the primacy to the ideal, and among the ideal to the moral; and so doing, it affirms the eternal worth of our human life and the eternal importance of our human tasks.

In India we are confronted by a valuation fundamentally different. To the world of our experience and to human life as we know it on earth, all value is denied. The world, including separate personalities, is Maya, illusion, and there is nothing real except Brahma. And what is Brahma? According to the Upanishad thinkers, he (or it) can be described only by negatives. If the idea has any positive content, it is to be found in contemplative thought—thought that is impersonal and free from all change and striving. Union with Brahma, which is the goal of redemption, comes through a series of disciplines calculated to detach the self from the world and all its interests, destroy the sense of separate individuality, and wither action at its source. The will to live being killed, the self, escaping from the law of Karma and the sorrowful, weary wheel of transmigration, enters Nirvana.

This, so far as empirical existence is concerned, so pessimistic outlook Gautama inherited and made more explicit. In rejecting the idea of union with Brahma, he practically eliminated religion from his system, leaving his system a bare means of deliverance from the intolerable evil of life. His most valuable contribution was a body of moral teaching of singular elevation and his own high moral seriousness.

In the later Buddhism the religious element was restored. Gautama himself became to his followers

an object of religious veneration, and was even interpreted, in a way that reminds us of the Logos doctrine, as an effluence from the eternal and all-pervading world-soul. More important religiously was the introduction of the idea of divine helpers called Bodhisattvas. These helpers are not, properly speaking, gods ; they are men who, ready for Nirvana, have renounced it in order to become the teachers and saviours of suffering humanity ; but they exercise the functions of a god. To them the layman looks for salvation, and hopes to join their ranks in the distant future. As a result of this development, a new emphasis is placed on the disposition of pity and love towards all creatures. In the older Buddhism a man's thoughts were mainly occupied with the task of winning his own deliverance from the sore cycle of birth, death, and rebirth.

Although in this new or Mahayana Buddhism there are obvious points of contact with Christianity, the distance between the two religions is not substantially lessened. The pessimism with respect to life and its values, in which all the higher religion of India has its source, is not overcome. If the ethical is given a high place, in the last resort it holds this place only as a means to a redemption which transcends it. It is not as in Christianity established on the throne of being. The two religions rest on opposed valuations.

With Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Platonism, and Islam Christianity has not a little in common. All can be described as more or less ethical religions. In conservative Judaism, however, so much is retained that is merely particularistic and national that its claim to universality is subject to serious deduction. Between liberal Judaism and Christianity the difference often narrows itself down to questions of speculative theology.

Islam is only half ethical. Its God, notwithstanding the attributes of justice and mercy ascribed to him, is capricious and remorseless—the God of the relentless desert that holds you in its grip and may destroy you at any moment.

Among all the religions that have appeared in history only of Christianity can it be said that it is fundamentally and consistently ethical. That is its greatness—that and the fact that it has at the heart of it the supreme personality of Jesus. Have we any outlook beyond it ?

CHAPTER III

RELIGIOUS APPREHENSION

VERY early there grew up in the Church a theory of religious knowledge which has dominated Catholic thought down to the present, and a wide circle of Protestant thought as well. According to this theory there are two mental processes by which we come into possession of religious truth—that of reason and that of faith. To reason, reflecting on the Divine works of Creation and Providence, is conceded the ability to discover and demonstrate the truths of so-called natural religion—the unity and moral character of God, a moral world-order and a future life of rewards and punishments. But there its competency ends. The distinctive doctrines of Christianity, on the acceptance of which salvation depends, are given not by reason, but by supernatural revelation ; and when they are received as true, it can only be, in the first place at least, by an act of intellectual submission to the infallible authority that guarantees them. This assent to Church doctrine on the ground of its authoritative character is what is meant by faith. By Aquinas faith is defined as " an act of the intellect, which is moved to assent through the will." In his desire for salvation a man wills assent to the teaching of the Church, thus fulfilling the condition on which alone salvation can be obtained.

The mutual relations of faith and reason, as thus

conceived, formed the chief theological problem of the Middle Ages. That the Church's doctrines were not the product of reason, all were agreed ; but the Scholastic Movement had its rise in the inspiring idea that, though not the product of reason, they were nevertheless capable of being made intelligible to it and of having their truth rationally demonstrated. *Credo ut intelligam*, declared Anselm, and his *Cur deus homo* is the most familiar monument of the Scholastic enterprise. The enterprise was, however, foredoomed to failure, and the second half of the Middle Ages saw its abandonment. Although the Church never committed itself to the thoroughgoing anti-rationalism of Duns Scotus, it treated its doctrines as for the most part supra-rational, and in any case to be received in the last resort on the ground of the authority behind them.

It was one of Luther's epoch-making achievements that he broke with this Roman conception of faith and put in its place one far more vital and evangelical. As Luther clearly understood, a faith that is a mere holding for true of a guaranteed doctrine is destitute of regenerative force and dependent for its value on the false notion that it is a meritorious action which God will reward. For him faith meant trust in the God who has disclosed His heart in Jesus Christ. Such trust is no product of the human will, no " work " for which credit can be claimed, but is created in the soul by God Himself, through the force of the Christian revelation. And it contains within it the potency of all good works. The idea of an external authority thus falls away, and religious truth is regarded as eliciting a personal conviction by its own intrinsic appeal to the heart and conscience.

Unfortunately the great reformer had only an imperfect understanding of the implications of his new

conception of faith, and, besides, his temper was too conservative to permit him to follow these up. When it came to a dispute about doctrine, he could, with patent inconsistency, insist on the letter of Scripture as the authoritative and final arbiter; and his controversy with the radicals, and particularly with Zwingli, drove him ever further in this direction. Sometimes he spoke as if belief in Christ was one and the same thing with belief in the articles of the Creed; and if he never quite identified faith with orthodoxy, it was not long before the Protestant Church took this step. Luther's new insight into the nature of faith was thus all but lost; for it made little practical difference that the authority appealed to was no longer the Church but the Bible.

Not until the Rationalistic movement of the eighteenth century was the authority idea seriously shaken. Rationalism proclaimed from the housetop the autonomy of the human mind and the right and duty of free inquiry. Nothing is to be received as true except what can give an account of itself to reason; whatever fails to meet this test must be rejected as mere superstition.

Rationalism had many defects, but its vindication of the right of thought in the religious no less than in the secular domain stands and will stand. It has to be noted, however, that there is an exercise of authority in religion which does not infringe this right, and is no burden or fetter, but rather a support. Religious knowledge is not like that of science, which compels belief the moment its truth has been demonstrated. Our acceptance of it in any vital way depends, as we have seen, on our feeling for values. And not seldom our faith falters because we lack the courage to believe. We hesitate to cast ourselves on the good and true, making the great affirmation. In such an emergency the touch of

a mightier faith has a wondrous power to bring reinforcement. The faith of the ordinary man hangs in no small measure on that of the hero, as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews understood when he marshalled his cloud of witnesses and pointed to the figure on the Cross. Authority so exercised neither overrides our own perceptions nor is a substitute for them. What the prophet does for us is to lift us to his own standpoint, so that we can see with our own eyes what he sees, and to inspire us with something of his own courage.

It is not, however, in this purely religious domain, but in that of speculative doctrine that the appeal to authority is generally made. And here it is from every point of view illegitimate. An idea that is held merely as a piece of guaranteed information is not really ours. It becomes ours only when it grips us by its own inherent significance. Sometimes the appeal is defended on the plea that in our thinking it is necessary to maintain continuity with the past, and that the Church needs to be protected against the vagaries of the individual. But continuity is a thing that is well able to look after itself, tradition being continually operative as a conservative force apart from any direct appeal to it; and mere vagaries, even if they succeed in attracting attention, soon disappear in the general march of thought. The appeal to authority means intellectual pupilage; and while this may be the ideal of the Catholic, it is certainly not that of the Protestant, Church, which stands for the principle that belief must represent personal conviction.

In vindicating the independence of the human mind, as against all presumed authorities, Rationalism rendered to theology and to thought in general a memorable service. But what are we to understand by the

"Reason," which Rationalism enthroned as the sole organ of knowledge? Is it a single, uniform process, identical, perhaps, with our logical faculty? Or does the term cover more than one process? Is the process through which the scientist explores the secrets of nature, and the philosopher builds up all knowledge into a system, one with that which leads us to the conviction that there is a God? To this question Rationalism had no answer. The question lay outside its horizon, the term reason being used in an uncritical way to cover the sum of man's cognitive powers. For a systematic and critical examination of these powers we have to wait until Kant; and Kant's account of them forms the starting-point of all modern epistemology.

Analysing our thinking, Kant finds two distinct processes—that of the theoretical and that of the practical reason. By the theoretical reason he means that logical process which is in play when we infer from an event to its cause, or from an idea to what is implied in it. It is the process of which the whole vast structure of science is the outcome. For its domain it has the phenomenal world, the world of space and time, that mechanical system of things in which every event is connected with its antecedent by an invariable causal law. Within this domain the theoretical reason reigns supreme, reaching results that can be held with complete logical certainty.

But the phenomenal world, the realm of mechanism, is not, so Kant maintains, the only realm of reality. Behind it we must assume the existence of a world of "things-in-themselves," a supersensible and supernatural world, as the cause of the sense experience out of which the phenomenal world is constructed. It is with this world that religion has to do. But regarding

its nature our theoretical or logical reason can tell us nothing. When it attempts to transcend the world of space and time which is its proper domain, and to explore by means of its categories the mysterious beyond, its incompetence is at once demonstrated by the contradictions in which it finds itself involved. Kant passes in review the traditional proofs for the being of God, which are all of a logical character, and shows that either they are invalid or that they do not yield the result proposed. Had we no other cognitive faculty than the logical one, we should be shut up in agnosticism.

But Kant is no agnostic. The competence which he refuses to the theoretical reason he concedes to the practical. By the practical reason he means reason as legislative, imposing upon us an unconditional imperative, the "Thou shalt" of the moral law. The sense of duty, of moral obligation, is for Kant the greatest and most distinctive thing in our human nature, and it is from it that he finds a pathway leading to a knowledge of noumenal or ultimate reality. The three great religious ideas—freedom, immortality, and God—come to us, he maintains, as postulates of our moral consciousness. In other words, they are implied in our sense of duty: their truth must be assumed if our sense of duty is not to be nullified and stultified.

We must assume that our will is free, for obligation to obey the moral law presupposes the power to obey it; if I must, I can. We are as certain, therefore, of our freedom as we are of being under moral obligation. And if freedom is a fact, then man is not, like a stock or a stone, a mere cog in the mechanism of nature, but stands above nature and claims to rule it. He is a person, an end in himself, possessing a worth and dignity, and belongs, so far as his moral will is concerned, not to the

phenomenal or natural world, but to the supernatural world of the ultimately real.

Further, on the ground of our sense of duty, we must assume that the soul is immortal. Does not the moral law make a demand upon us—that of perfect conformity to its behests—which we cannot possibly fulfil under the conditions of our earthly life ? Only if we have eternity before us can this goal be progressively attained.

In making good the third postulate, Kant is admittedly confused and inconsistent, but one can see what he is driving at. In our conception of perfect blessedness, he argues, we include not only virtue but a degree of happiness proportionate to it. Happiness, however, is in part at least dependent on the ultimate harmony of nature with man's moral being ; and this harmony can be established and guaranteed only if there is a supreme intelligent and righteous Will that is the Lord of nature.

Such, in brief outline, is Kant's epoch-making theory of knowledge. Some of its cardinal positions have secured wide acceptance. There is a fairly general agreement that the reality of the objects of religious faith are incapable of complete logical demonstration, and that religious belief is in some way morally conditioned. When writers like William James, Pringle Pattison, and Sorley insist that the idea of God has been developed in response not to logical necessities, but to the needs of our moral life, they are following in the wake of Kant. And Kantian, too, is the generally adopted line of apologetic as against naturalistic theories masquerading in the dress of science, that the methods of science do not take us beyond the mechanistic aspect of reality, and that this, though an indubitable aspect, is not the only one or the most important.

While Kant's theory of knowledge has profoundly

affected modern thought, there are few, if any, to-day who hold it in its entirety. From the religious standpoint its account of the idea of God as a postulate is open to the gravest objections. What this account means is that God belongs not to the world in which our lot is cast, but to a supersensible and transcendent world, inaccessible to our knowledge. While we must believe in the existence of God as involved in our consciousness of duty, we can nowhere come into immediate contact with Him. The idea of a Divine revelation and of a personal intercourse of man with his Maker is excluded. These conclusions, so intolerable for religion, are bound up with Kant's phenomenalism—the theory, namely, that the world of our experience is not the real world of " things-in-themselves," but a world of appearances, the creation of our own mind out of the data supplied by the senses. Such a world cannot be the home of Deity. Deity can be no object of experience ; only a postulate. One has but to glance at the artificial way in which Kant reaches the idea of God to satisfy oneself that it does not at all represent the religious process. Men do not become certain of God by reflecting on the necessity for a guarantee of the ultimate coincidence of virtue and happiness.

What the religious process is we have already tried to show. Our belief in God is rooted in our feeling for values, more particularly in our feeling for the ideal values. It is under the form of value that the Divine is apprehended ; the Divine is that which approves itself to us as supreme in value. Confronted by a world which exhibits various grades of reality differing with respect to value, we affirm the highest, just because it is the highest, as the ultimately real, setting rationality, beauty, and goodness on the throne of the world, and subjecting to them the mechanism of nature as a mere

means or instrument. Religious faith we have found to be nothing else than just this cosmic affirmation of the highest reality that has entered into our experience.

The value theory of religious knowledge is a product of post-Kantian thought, although Kant provided fruitful suggestions. Among the most notable of those responsible for its development are Jacobi, Fries, De Wette, Lotze, and Ritschl. According to F. C. S. Schiller the discovery of the problem of values was the greatest achievement of philosophic thought in the nineteenth century. While less than twenty years ago the term values was of rare occurrence in current literature, now it has passed into popular speech. The theory still awaits a satisfactory formulation, and the present chapter is an attempt in this direction.

By a value is meant anything—a good dinner, a beautiful landscape, a noble poem, an heroic action—the possession or the contemplation of which affords us satisfaction. When the feeling awakened is that of dissatisfaction, we can speak of the object as a negative value or an unworth. Judgments in which value, positive or negative, is predicated—value or worth-judgments as they are called—have thus their ground in feeling, and represent an inner experience apart from which they are unintelligible. In this they differ from the so-called existential or theoretical judgments of mathematics and natural science, which have their ground not in feeling, but in the compulsion of sense-perception and logical thought. That an object awakens the feeling of satisfaction means that it meets some desire or need ; the feeling is but the index to this fact. Our evaluating faculty is therefore a function of the conative or practical side of our nature.

It may serve to make the difference between the two

classes of judgments still clearer if we give a couple of illustrations. We look into the sky and see a rainbow. If we have a scientific bent, we may remind ourselves of certain facts about it. It is an arc of prismatic colours, and is due to the combined effects of refraction and interference of the solar rays as they pass through the falling raindrops. The arc has a radius of from 40 to 42½ degrees, and the colours are arranged in the order of the spectrum. But after we have described and explained the rainbow in these and similar theoretical judgments, giving a complete scientific account of it, there is another assertion we may make that rests on a different basis and bears a different character. We may declare that the rainbow is beautiful. Here we have to do with it, not in its objective properties and relations, but as it affects the soul, appealing to our æsthetic feelings. We attribute to it a quality, that of æsthetic value, with which the physicist, *qua* physicist, has no concern. As our second illustration we take a human action. From a sense of duty to himself and his family a man fights and overcomes the drug habit under which he has fallen. Of this action or series of actions the psychologist from his particular standpoint will have much to say. He will speak of habits and their formation and of the difficulty of breaking with them. He will analyse the sentiment of duty and trace its development in the race. He may introduce the man's subconscious self as contributing to the result. But the moral goodness or rightness of the action does not fall within the scope of his science. When we pronounce the action good, we consider it from quite another standpoint than the theoretical—the standpoint of value. Our judgment is a worth-judgment and has its ground in our feeling for the moral. From these illustrations it will be seen that our attitude towards

reality is not merely one of perceiving and understanding; we also discriminate with respect to value; and we can add that the second attitude pervades and determines our thinking as much as the first.

The things possessing the property of worthfulness are, of course, indefinitely numerous, for there is practically nothing which has not an interest for some one; but a certain mastery of the field can be obtained by a system of classification. It is perhaps possible to bring the crowd of values under one or other of four groups. The first group we may call the utilitarian. Under it falls whatever ministers to the needs of man's natural as contrasted with his spiritual life. Of a motor-car, a seam of coal, a shower of rain, a humorous story, an amiable disposition, we can say that it has a utilitarian value. The rational or intellectual values form the second group. Among the qualities that can be so described are order, consistency, unity in diversity, cunning adaptation of means to ends. The contemplation of one or other of these qualities in, say, the solar system, the constitution of an atom, the contrivances to secure cross-fertilization in plants, a type-setting machine, a philosophy, afford us intellectual satisfaction, and it irks us when we fail to find them. The æsthetic values make up the third group—beauty, sublimity, harmony in a landscape or a work of art, and melody in a piece of music. Last, there are the moral values—justice, mercy, veracity—in short, all those qualities that enter into our conception of the moral ideal.

To these four groups some would add a fifth, comprising the religious values. But this would be misleading. Religion adds no specifically new values to those already mentioned. There is no religious value that is not either hedonistic, rational, æsthetic, or ethical.

All that can be said is that these values, taken up into religion, receive a new and distinctive colour.

A point of capital importance with respect to values is that we arrange them in a scale of rank. The utilitarian we put at the bottom, without necessarily disparaging them. In contrast with the utilitarian we describe the rational, æsthetic, and moral values as ideal, and among the ideal we give the primacy to the moral.

Whether the world can have any existence apart from a percipient mind is a debatable and much debated question; but that the reality of values is wholly dependent on a subject who has a feeling for them, few will dispute. Clear the universe of rational beings, and truth, beauty, and goodness will disappear; clear it of sentiency, and pleasure and pain will vanish as well. Value and life hang together so that we cannot have one without the other. In view of this fact it is necessary to distinguish between values that are intrinsic and those that are merely instrumental. To inanimate things only the latter kind of value can be ascribed. If the mechanism of nature has a worth, it is only in its relation to life, as providing a basis for it, as affording pleasure, as being a medium of rationality and beauty, and an instrument if not a medium of goodness. Its value is instrumental: it is not itself a seat or centre of value. Only when we have life can we speak of intrinsic value, and ultimately there is no value but life. The humblest insect, as sensitive at least to pleasure and pain, belongs in some limited sense to the realm of ends. In some limited sense it is a centre of value. And man is a centre of value in a larger sense as appreciative not merely of pleasure, but also of truth, beauty, and goodness. In him the ideal values can find a home.

In these days of voluntaristic psychology the all-

pervading significance of the valuational side of our nature, which is one with the conative, does not need to be insisted on. That there are things that have a value for us, and that we discriminate among values, ranking one above another, is what makes life. Theoretical processes are, in the last resort, the servants of our practical needs. If knowledge had not an interest for us, no train of thought could be pursued. And it is the fact of values that gives to our life its meaning. To say that life has meaning, is to say that there are things in the pursuit or possession of which we find satisfaction. Further, it is in a man's authentic valuations that we find the measure of his character. When we know the things in which he delights and those he is indifferent to or abhors —his estimate of money, pleasure, fame, knowledge, honour, dutifulness—we know the man he is. The same is true of a people or an age. The genius of the Hebrews, the Greeks, the Romans, the British, the Americans, is given in their value-judgments. If a book like the *Iliad* brings up before us a long-vanished civilization, it is less from its description of manners than because it shows us what was held in highest esteem and what in deepest contempt.

And there is another point still more profound in its significance. The Psalmist elevates man to a position in creation only a little lower than the angels. "Thou madest him to have dominion over the work of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." In what does this supernatural dignity consist? It consists for one thing in man's ability to appreciate not merely material satisfactions, but those that are ideal. Responding to the rational, the beautiful, and the good, he links himself with the Eternal Spirit that makes nature the medium or the instrument of these high values. And

this is not all. Man is endowed with something of the Divine power to rule nature and make it tributary to his ends. He can harness Niagara to his chariot and compel the ether to carry his messages with wings swifter than the winds. Into confusion he can bring order; from a chaos construct a cosmos. Out of a block of marble he can fashion a work of art, and link sounds into music. And he has a capacity still more august. Kant was true to the spirit of Christianity when, in opposition to the intellectualism inherited from Greece, he insisted that man's unique dignity lies less in his rational and æsthetic than in his moral endowment. Man can set himself above nature as it exists within him, and rule it in the interest of the moral ideal. He is not, when he is true to his destiny, the plaything of his passions, but their master. And if he cannot always dispose of circumstances according to his will, he can so bear himself under them as to make them the minister of his deepest life. It is in terms of value, therefore, that man's dignity must be described. Man's dignity consists in the fact that he can appreciate the higher as well as the lower values, and that he can be their home, nay in a real sense their creator, making nature the instrument of his purpose.

Possessing in man's life a significance so universal and profound, it would be strange indeed if values and the feeling for them did not enter into the innermost structure of his religion. That they do so enter we have seen. In the feeling for values which leads us to subordinate what has no value in itself to that which has, and to establish the highest that has come within our experience at the centre of being, we have found the subjective root of all in religion that is spiritual. Religious faith can be described as trust in the rational, the beautiful,

and, above all, the good, as the ultimate reality in the universe.

What this means is that in religion we give to our valuations a cosmic sweep, treating them as of eternal and universal validity. The values that give to our human life its meaning and law, we use as the key to the interpretation of the world. Between this interpretation and that given by science, there is no necessary conflict. Unquestionably all existence, psychical no less than physical, has its mechanistic side. The world is a causal system in which everything is connected with everything else, according to unvarying laws. But when the psychologist and the physicist have said all that can be said from their particular standpoint, they are far from having given a complete account of reality. Reality has another and infinitely more significant side, which it does not fall within their province to explore. In addition to the properties and relations predicated in our theoretical judgments, objects have the property of being worthful and in different degrees. We discriminate between that which in itself has no value and that which has, and we subject the lower to the higher. We rank the living above the dead, creative reason above the mechanical process that is the medium and instrument of its ideas, the moral will above any physical force and above the animal instincts and passions over which it is called to rule. Treating the highest in value as the ultimate in being, we set a God at the heart of things.

It is only to express the same truth in other words when we say that in religion we view the world teleologically. The category of means and end belongs not to the theoretical, but to the practical side of our thinking. Apart from the fact of value it would never suggest itself; what constitutes anything an end is the possession

of this property. In a purely theoretical explanation of the world the category has therefore no place, and the scientist rightly refuses to employ it. But for religion it is vital. Religion demands that the world no less than our human life have a meaning—in other words, that it have at its core a kingdom of ends or intrinsic values to which that which in itself has no value can be related as a means. That the causal mechanism of nature is the minister of sentiency gives it a certain limited meaning, and a far loftier meaning discloses itself when we think of it as the minister of spirit. It is the medium and instrument of eternal wisdom and eternal beauty; and notwithstanding the insistent and baffling problems that present themselves, religion has clung to the conviction that it is the instrument also of eternal goodness.

This argument from value to existence, from value for us to value for the universe, is to be sharply distinguished from every form of logical inference, and, in particular, from that on which the traditional theistic proofs rest. In these proofs, with the exception of the ontological, the inference is from an effect to its cause. The world, with its marvellous adaptations of means to ends and its beings conscious of obligation to a law above them, is an effect which can find its sufficient cause only in a self-existent, intelligent, and moral being. God, in other words, is the one hypothesis by which the world can be causally explained. This line of argument, as we shall see in a later chapter, is not without its importance for faith. It lends to faith a certain support; but, as most writers to-day would admit, it does not represent its real ground. If the idea of a world without God is intolerable to us, it is not because the world would be left without an adequate causal explanation, or for any other theoretical reason. It is because such

a world would be an outrage on our feeling for values. Our high values—truth, beauty, and goodness—would be driven from their seat at the centre of being, and their place taken by what in itself has no value. The world would be stripped of all meaning. That is the intolerable thing. It is not primarily the logical but the practical side of our nature that lifts its protest.

From this it follows that the certainty attaching to religious knowledge is not primarily of the logical kind. If it were, it would be a very measurable quantity indeed; for few pretend that the existence of any sort of God, not to speak of a God of righteousness and love, is capable of complete logical demonstration. All we should have would be a probability. Some, it is true, have been willing to adjust themselves to this situation, accepting Butler's maxim that probability is the guide of life. Cardinal Newman tried to make out that the manifold probabilities on which our faith rests, while separately insufficient for certainty, are, when put together, irrefragable. But in all this the nerve of faith is missed or misunderstood The truth is that religious certainty is measured, not by the greater or lesser cogency of the arguments that can be mustered in its support or by their number, but by the intensity of our feeling for the rational and far more for the good.

That our religious convictions have such a basis forbids us to equate them with the knowledge of the world supplied by scientific investigation. They do not, like the latter, have the character of exact knowledge. Always there attaches to our religious ideas an element of symbol, which we can recognize but cannot eliminate without emptying them of their vital content. One must not, however, with Kant, deny them the name of knowledge, for that inevitably suggests a doubt as to

their objective validity. It is precisely into his religious convictions that a man throws the whole force and passion of his soul.

The account we have given of religious knowledge has certain points of similarity with that offered by Pragmatism, and certain equally important points of dissimilarity. Pragmatists are at one in recognizing that religious knowledge is not rooted in the impulse to explain and unify, but has a practical origin. The idea of God is thrown up to meet the needs of the moral life. What these needs are is differently stated by different writers. Some speak of the need for an assurance that the world is such that the moral life can be lived. Others, making greater demands on the world, speak of the moral consciousness as postulating, from a feeling of its own insufficiency and insecurity, an eternally creative good will operating behind it and with it. In general we may say that the need in view is some effective guarantee that our ideals shall not be doomed to frustration, but shall ultimately find their fulfilment. Without such a guarantee men would not have the courage to attempt and persevere. But as thrown up by the moral consciousness to meet its needs, the idea of God is nothing more than a hypothesis; and, like the hypotheses of science, it must be verified before it can claim to rank as knowledge. Pragmatism recognizes no verification that is not of the practical variety. How does the idea of God work out in life? that is the test. If it show itself endowed with the power to inspire and support us in our moral endeavour, to develop personality, organize and fructify experience, and promote social progress, we are entitled to regard it as a true idea. Obviously, before we can put it to the test we must, if we are not to rely entirely on the experience of others, have enough con-

fidence in it to stake our life on the issue ; and it is just this element of venture that sets upon faith its peculiar stamp.

This conception of religious knowledge, which has dominated the bulk of American theological thinking since the days of William James, has the signal merit of emphasizing its moral conditionedness, and represents a healthy reaction from the intellectualism of the Absolutist philosophy the spell of which James did so much to break. At the same time it lies open to more than one objection of a serious kind. While the moral consciousness is the most important spring of religion, it is not the only one. Our feeling for the rational and the æsthetic also plays its part. Further, to relate religion to morality as means to end, treating religion as merely the handmaid of the moral, is false both historically and psychologically. The idea of God when firmly held does, as a matter of fact, arm us with courage and strength for the moral battle by the assurance it gives us of the ultimate victory of the good ; but it is not the case that it is generated for this purpose. Religion lives in its own right, blazing up in human hearts irrespective of any end to be served outside itself.

Finally, and here we touch the most objectionable feature of the Pragmatist theory, it is not for a moment to be admitted that the idea of God is at the outset no more than a working hypothesis, and that it has to be confirmed by the experience of its salutary moral influence before it can be regarded as unquestionably true. Few religious people, one ventures to say, ever took it up in that tentative fashion. In view of the facts of religious experience, the study of which James did much to foster, such an account of it is almost grotesque. What religious experience speaks of, is not the trying out

of an hypothesis, but a being apprehended by God. Pragmatism is misled by a mistaken desire to bring religious ideas into line with those of science. The latter are, of course, hypotheses that have been verified. No doubt it is true that religious faith can be deepened and strengthened by the experience which life brings. If it is permissible to speak of this as a verification of our religious ideas, the verification is of another kind than that which the Pragmatists have in view. It consists in a deeper experience of values and their worth. The more we throw ourselves on the good and act it out, the more sacred and august does it appear to us, and the stronger our impulse to establish it on the throne of being. Of a verification such as the scientist demands, we cannot speak. To the end our faith remains a faith. It is never changed into knowledge in the sense in which the scientist understands the term.

The legitimacy of concluding, as we have done, from value to objective existence has not passed without challenge. It has been characterized as an attempt to elevate our subjective desires and wishes into a law for the universe. "Human ethical notions," writes Bertrand Russell, "are essentially anthropocentric and involve, when used in metaphysics, an attempt, however veiled, to legislate for the universe on the basis of the present desires of man. In this way they interfere with that receptivity to fact which is the essence of the scientific attitude towards the universe."[1] Russell stoically accepts the situation that we must hold by our values in the face of a world that cares nothing at all for them, and will sooner or later swallow them and us in the same abyss of oblivion. Without sharing in his pessimistic outlook, Sorley, Alexander, Perry, Beckwith, Santayana,

[1] *Mysticism and Logic*, pp. 107 ff.

and others insist with him on the illegitimacy of giving to our valuations an immediate cosmic validity and making our subjective interests a law to the universe.

Legitimately or illegitimately, Religion, if our account of it is correct, takes this leap. But can our faith affirmations be justly described as the expression of a mere individual interest or wish? Our valuational attitude towards reality is as deeply rooted in our nature, as much part of the texture of our thought, as our logical attitude. It is bound up with all that is greatest in human personality, and an outrage on it is not less but more intolerable than a logical fallacy. "Our sense of value," writes Pringle Pattison, "is not a matter of selfish preference or individual desire. The judgment of value is as impartial as it is unhesitating. It is as objective in its own sphere as a scientific judgment in matters of fact. . . . In its pronouncements as to what possesses value and what does not, in its recognition of the main forms of value, and in its general scale of higher and lower, it represents an unswerving conviction. When man confronts the world with his standards of value, his attitude is not that of a suppliant, but that of a judge. He pronounces sentence on the travesty of a universe which Naturalism offers him."[1] To the same effect are the words of Lotze: "In its feeling for the value of things and their relations, our reason possesses as genuine a revelation as in the principles of logical investigation it has an indispensable instrument of experience."

There is a second criticism of the value-theory of religious knowledge which requires to be considered. Our valuations, it is objected, are lacking in the necessary uniformity and stability. Who is to decide what the

[1] *The Idea of God*, p. 42.

highest values are? Values have changed in the past, and there is no universally recognized system of values to-day. Is it not conceivable that the future may confirm Nietzsche's demand for a transvaluation of all our present values? A religion or a philosophy dependent on our valuations is therefore, it is contended, under the suspicion of having its foundation in shifting sand.

Many there are who would be ready to meet this criticism with the claim that in our Christian religion or in its sacred books we have an absolute norm and standard alike of value and belief, which lifts religion clear above the fluctuations and mutations of human feeling and opinion. But this line of defence is one we cannot occupy. There is no absolute and authoritative norm that can override inner feeling. We hold high our Christian values—justice, mercy, truth, purity, self-forgetting, self-sacrificing love and service—in the confidence that ultimately they must win universal recognition; but if individuals or races show themselves unresponsive, there remains no additional means by which conviction may be generated. And if values and their relative emphasis change in the course of the centuries, as unquestionably they do, it is not within the capacity of any presumed objective standard to arrest the tide. Our feeling for values, moulded by long centuries of experience, but not incapable of learning to appreciate what is new, is the ultimate behind which we cannot go. It is the index of developing life; in some sense it is life itself.

Two things have, however, to be remembered. Religion is no more static than values are. And when the latter change, the former is sooner or later subjected to a corresponding change. A change in our valuations is not the only source of change in religion, but it is

by far the most profound. The second thing to be remembered is that values, while subject to change, have an immense stability. Certainly, if they were as unstable as Hoeffding tries to make out, the fact, when it dawned on the mind, would go far to rob faith of its security. One could not hold with any deep conviction the Christian idea of a God of love, if confronted by the probability that in the development of the moral consciousness what we call love may be altered beyond recognition, or reduced to insignificance in a completely new system of values of which we can form no conception. Such a forecast, however, is nothing more than a piece of unbridled imagination without the slightest support in experience. Values have an immense stability, as human nature also has. Changes are slow and relate rather to comparative emphasis and to a development of the old than to a discarding of the old and the production of something completely new. Not even of Jesus can we say that He revolutionized the system which He inherited. That the main forms of value—the utilitarian, the rational, the æsthetic, and the moral—and the grand moral virtues should ever lose their significance is unthinkable. Into our time-life with its changes there enters an element that is universal and eternal.

The theory of religious apprehension we have tried to expound can, we think, be shown to account for certain peculiar features which have always been recognized as attaching to such apprehension.

Always it has been recognized that faith is less a function of the head than of the heart, and that it is morally conditioned. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." "The things of the Spirit are spiritually discerned." "The heart," says Pascal, "has reasons which reason does not know. There are truths

that are felt and there are truths that are proved ; for we know truth not only by the reason, but by the intuitive conviction which may be called the heart." Were faith a purely logical function, such assertions would be meaningless. They are not meaningless but luminous, when we understand that our religious knowledge comes to us through our appreciation of the highest reality on which our eyes have looked. Only he who inwardly responds to that reality in reverence and trust will experience the impulse to build upon it the fabric of the universe.

Again, our theory explains and justifies the position which men like St. Paul and the writer of Hebrews and Luther have given to faith as the authentic spring of the Christian life. A faith which is nothing more than deference to authority or the outcome of a logical process cannot possibly play so vital a part. But how if faith means our feeling and attitude towards the kingdom of the good ? One can then find in it the source not only of religious knowledge but of religious practice. Often enough, it is true, the unity of knowledge and practice suffers disruption. There is such a thing as a dead faith, a religious belief that produces no works. But this, too, we can explain from our standpoint. A dead faith is one that survives as a mere tradition or as a habit, the feeling for values which originally lay at the heart of it having so diminished in seriousness and intensity as to leave it impotent to shape life and conduct.

Finally, we can explain from our standpoint how faith should be described as the gift of God and at the same time a man be held responsible for its exercise. No one can command faith by the fiat of his will or argue himself into it. What in the last resort awakens it is the impact of Divine reality, the realm of values,

more particularly the moral values. In that realm God meets us, lays His hand upon us, and calls us with a high call. But this is not to say that faith is wholly independent of the will. If we cannot believe by force of will, we can act out the faith that has been created within us, and, acted out, it will deepen and expand.

CHAPTER IV

THE IDEA OF REVELATION

IN all the great historical religions the belief in a Divine revelation meets us; and indeed it is not easy to see how in its absence a living spiritual, or at least a living ethical, religion were possible. It is not merely that religion presupposes the knowableness of the eternal Power on which we hang; something more than that presupposition is surely involved. A God who is purely passive in the religious relation, who makes no approach to man, but like the Infinite Substance of Spinoza has to be explored, as one explores the properties of a gas or a triangle, is not the God of the Christian or of any other vital faith. Always vital religion has at the heart of it the belief in a real intercourse, not only of man with God, but of God with man. This is its language: "The voice of the Lord hath spoken." "I have been apprehended of God." "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined into our heart." When the sense of a Divine approach fades, religion inevitably decays. In any theory of revelation this fact must be kept clearly in view.

But before proceeding to the task of construction, it may be well to consider what the traditional theory offers us, and how far it is tenable. According to the traditional theory, revelation is twofold. Something about God we may learn from the Divine works of

Creation and Providence by the use of our rational faculties. We can demonstrate His existence, that He is righteous, and that He will call us to account and deal out rewards and punishments in a future life according to the character of our deeds. This general and natural revelation is, however, insufficient for salvation; and God has supplemented it by that special and supernatural revelation contained in Holy Scripture. In addition to confirming the natural revelation, the supernatural gives us a series of new truths which our reason could never have discovered. What are these truths? They are the doctrines summarily reproduced in the creeds of the Church. To the question, What is the content of the specifically Christian revelation?—tradition gives the answer, It is the doctrine of Christ's true Deity, the doctrine of the Incarnation, the doctrine of the Atonement, the doctrine of Christ's activity as the Risen Lord and of His second coming in glory. These, and their associated doctrines, constitute the Gospel and are the proper objects of Christian faith.

The position of conservative theology to-day differs but little from that we have described. If the significance of the element of historical fact is more explicitly affirmed, the identity of revelation and doctrine is strenuously maintained. The formulation given to the theory by Richard Rothe three-quarters of a century ago may be taken as representative.

In revelation, Rothe distinguishes between two elements, that of manifestation and that of inspired interpretation. Our consciousness of God, he declares, is so weakened by sin that we cannot find Him with any certainty in the ordinary course of nature and history. If sinful man is to find God, God must bring into his horizon a series of facts which are so constituted that

he can receive from them the right idea of God and with such evidence as shall produce conviction. What then must be the character of the new facts if they are to yield the result proposed? They must be such that they cannot be explained from the working of the forces inherent in the world, but require for their explanation the direct intervention of Deity. In other words, they must be supernatural in the sense of miraculous. Holy Scripture is in part the record of just such a supernatural history. And the facts of this history are what Rothe means by manifestation. What of the interpretation of the facts? This is not left to our own spiritual discernment, for our sin-clouded minds cannot be trusted to read the facts aright. Specially illumined and inspired men must read them for us. Scripture therefore supplies us not only with the supernatural history, but also with an authoritative interpretation of it. To take one or two illustrations: Israel's deliverance at the Red Sea is manifestation; and the interpretation of that miraculous event is given in the words, "I am the Lord thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt." Similarly, Jesus' life and death come under the head of manifestation; His self-witness and the witness of His apostles to His Divine dignity and the atoning significance of His Cross, under that of inspired interpretation.

Obviously this account of revelation does nothing more than add explicitness to the traditional view. In no direction does it carry us beyond it. Its importance consists, as we have indicated, in its representative character. Writers like Fairbairn, Denney, Gore, Forsyth, Garvie, and Machen distinguish with Rothe between the saving facts and the inspired interpretation. And with Rothe they see in the supernatural character of the facts their distinctive and significant feature. The

modern critical and historical method of dealing with the narratives of the Bible and with the development of its thought is resented as stripping the Bible of its distinctive quality and value. And it is the inspired construction of the facts, in other words the doctrines, that constitute for these writers the Christian revelation and gospel. "The Christian religion," writes Fairbairn, "is not built upon faith in Jesus of Nazareth, but upon the belief that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God. Without this belief the religion could have had no existence; the moment it lived, the religion began to be. . . . In the Synoptic Gospels we have what may be termed the personal and subjective religion of Jesus, that is, the modes under which He conceived His relation to God and fulfilled His duties towards man; but had they stood alone, we should have had only one picture the more of the ideal man, a being to admire and imitate, not to worship and obey. In the Apostolic Epistles the person is interpreted in relation to the religion, and as the interpretation proceeds, the religion becomes more clearly defined, distinct in quality, real in character, absolute in authority." [1] Without the authoritatively given construction or interpretation of Christ's person and work, without the traditional doctrines, no Christianity—that is the position to which conservative theology in general is committed. The Christian revelation and gospel is found not in the Sermon on the Mount or in the parable of the Prodigal Son, but in the story of the God in the manger and on the cross.

Though this conception of revelation has governed the thought of the Church from the earliest days, dissentient voices have seldom been altogether lacking; and throughout the past century the volume of protest

[1] *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, pp. 476 ff.

has been steadily and rapidly on the increase. Thousands of Christian people who have never consciously broken with it have in reality done so by seeking their inspiration elsewhere than in the traditional doctrines. When the cry is raised for an undogmatic Christianity and a return from Paul to Jesus, what is sought is not a religion without any definite beliefs, but one that has another basis than the old credal statements. To the present writer, at least, the objections that can be brought against the traditional equating of revelation and doctrine seem absolutely decisive.

For years and even centuries the foundations on which this conception is built have been suffering steady disintegration and are now in a ruinous condition. Miracle is playing an ever-diminishing part in religion. What gives to an historical event or an historical personality its religious significance is not, we are more and more coming to realize, its alleged miraculous character, but the values it embodies and for which it stands. Could a time ever arrive when Jesus should have ceased to command men by the depth and purity of His teaching, the might of His faith and love, and the grandeur of His life and death, no appeal to miraculous elements in His personality and career would avail to preserve for Him His place at the centre of religion. The doctrine of Inspiration, as a species of miraculous control in the interests of inerrancy, has also suffered eclipse. If the Bible stands, and will stand, it is not because of any guarantee behind it, but because it has a quality that the lapse of centuries and millenniums cannot impair or antiquate. The very notion of a teaching guaranteed by an external authority is, as we have seen, inconsistent with a right understanding of religious faith. What awakens faith is not the guarantee but the truth itself.

And the collapse of this notion carries down with it the old distinction between general revelation and special. As the comparative study of religion has made clear, religious truth came in no essentially different way to Zoroaster, Socrates, and Plato from what it did to Amos, Isaiah, and Paul. The truth that God is just, which is conceded to general revelation, does not rest on another basis than that underlying the distinctively Christian truth that He loves and forgives the sinner. However we are to conceive of revelation, the traditional conception of it as a system of supernaturally communicated and therefore authoritative information about Divine things has been discredited beyond the possibility of resuscitation.

The identification of revelation with dogma has its own peculiar difficulties to face. In the first place, there is the problem created by the irrefragable fact that in the gospel preached by Jesus Himself dogma is conspicuous by its absence.[1] It is true that in the Synoptic account of His teaching there are certain doctrinal elements that may, and we believe will, survive the sifting of criticism. At least in the closing days of His career, Jesus spoke of Himself as the Son of Man, and attached to His death a saving significance. What, however, has to be noted is that nowhere does He require an acceptance of these ideas as a condition of discipleship or make them the basis of His proclamation. The great realities which He brings before men as the object of their faith are not any interpretation of His own person and work, but God, His kingdom and His righteousness. This unquestionable fact has always been felt by conservative theology as something of a problem, and attempts have been made to solve it. It was not to be

[1] Morgan, *The Religion and Theology of Paul*, pp. 252 ff.

expected, we are told, that the doctrines should have been formulated and proclaimed until Christ's redemptive work was before men's eyes in its completeness, and until His person was seen in the light of His resurrection. To the Apostles was reserved the task of unfolding the atoning significance of the death and the Divine rank of the victim. But does Jesus Himself, one may well ask, betray any consciousness of the merely provisional character of His message? That His gospel of the kingdom and righteousness of God was shortly to be superseded by or made subordinate to a new gospel of the Incarnation and the Atonement was an idea which, so far as the records allow us to judge, never crossed His mind. While the absence of doctrine from the gospel as proclaimed by Jesus does not stamp doctrine as worthless, it forbids us to regard it as the basis of our religion, forbids us therefore to equate it with revelation. Its derivative and secondary character will become clear if we glance for a moment at its origin. It is a product of Christian experience or, what is the same thing, of Christian faith. Not until our eyes have been opened to the moral glory of Jesus, and we have known something of His quickening and saving power, will a doctrine of His person and work have any meaning for us. In this precisely consists its significance, that it brings to intellectual expression what in our experience we have found Jesus to be. But if doctrine is a product of faith, it cannot at the same time be its ground and object. In our search for revelation we are therefore referred beyond doctrine to the experience out of which it arises, and in a sense beyond experience to the Divine reality that creates it.

The conception of revelation we have criticized has never had any influence outside the Church. Philo-

sophy and literature have simply ignored it. We turn for a moment to a conception the home of which is philosophy, and which has found in literature wide and splendid expression. It is that of a Divine self-manifestation in nature and human history. The whole world is viewed as an incarnation of Deity, fullest in the highest forms of being. It belongs to the innermost nature of God thus to unfold and manifest Himself. This, perhaps the greatest speculative idea ever thrown up by the human mind, has been presented in the most diverse forms. We meet with it in certain strains of Indian thought, and it lies at the basis of the Logos philosophy and the system of Plotinus. It inspires the thinking of Goethe, Wordsworth, Carlyle, and Emerson. "Matter," writes Carlyle, "exists only spiritually, and to represent some idea and body it forth. Heaven and earth are but the time vesture of the Eternal. The universe is but one vast symbol of God; nay, if thou wilt have it, what is man himself but a symbol of God? Is not all that he does symbolical, a revelation to sense of the mystic God-given force that is in him?—a Gospel of Freedom which he, the Messias of nature, preaches as he can by act and word." Modern idealistic philosophy is but the logical working out of this conception. Schleiermacher introduced the conception into theology, and Inge among present-day theologians has made it his own. With such a history it cannot be without some deep significance.

So long as we limit our attention to the rational and æsthetic aspects of reality, the conception seems entirely adequate. And it harmonizes with the modern thought of God as immanent in the world. When, however, we seek to apply it in the domain of the ethical, doubts begin to arise. Is a God whose deepest impulse is self-

expression the God of our Christian faith? Such an impulse is often described as equivalent to love or goodness; but it is not love in the Christian sense of the term, not the passion that moves to leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go out to seek the one that is lost. It has, in fact, no claim to be called ethical. Nor is self-expression or self-manifestation an end that can justify to our conscience the tragedy of the human story, the crimes and miseries, the blood and tears, that have marked the course of human history. Ethical religion requires that we conceive of revelation as having an ethical end and motive, and as representing a real approach of God to man.

In turning to the task of reconstruction, we begin by noting that faith and revelation are correlative terms, our conception of the one necessarily determining our conception of the other. If by faith we understand the subjection of the mind to an authority above it, revelation can mean nothing else than the communication of a system of guaranteed truths. If, again, we think of faith as an exercise of the logical reason, revelation will be identified with the facts on the basis of which the mind builds its theistic hypothesis. What is the conception involved in our account of faith as a cosmic affirmation of values? In this case obviously we shall find in values revelation's ultimate content. And what we have to do now is to show how values have come to us, and how from them the Christian knowledge of God has been built up, and is being continually generated afresh.

That the world of nature not only awakens within us the consciousness of a Power on which we depend, but has something to tell us regarding the character of that Power, has never lacked recognition. From it we receive

the ideas of infinity and eternity. Infinity and eternity are not, however, in themselves values ; and they assume revelational significance only when predicated of what is intrinsically worthful. And something of the latter we can discover in nature, which is the medium and instrument, if not of moral values, at least of such as are rational and æsthetic. We rejoice in the world as the home of a marvellous wisdom which the mind can track but never exhaust, and of an infinitely varied charm which custom can never stale. For religious faith these qualities are no chance aspects of a dead mechanism, something perhaps which we ourselves have read into it, but the shining out of central reality. Behind the play of mechanical forces faith discerns an infinite mind, which uses mechanism as its instrument and expresses itself in wisdom and beauty; an authentic revelation of Deity, even if it is not the highest, and one which the scientist, the poet, and the artist know how to appreciate.

If the moral nowhere meets us in the field of nature, it is the greatest and most distinctive reality of our human life. That man is a moral being is the highest that can be said of him ; and the question as to the connection of the moral with the Divine is the most vital one in all religion. Moral reality comes up before us under four aspects : as a law to be obeyed, an end to be achieved, an inner disposition to be cherished, and an order to be enforced. In each of these aspects it is taken up into religion and interpreted as revelation.

It was under the aspect of a law, and we should add, an order, that the moral first laid hold of the human mind and found its way into religion. A Hammurabi receives his Code from the hand of the national god, believing, no doubt, that it represented the god's unalterable will.

And centuries later, when that naive way of thinking had been left behind, the Hebrew prophets proclaimed the moral demand as the word of the Lord. "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil: learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." In the moral law, just because of its eternal obligation and worth, faith recognizes the revelation of the will that rules the universe. The message of the prophets has its ultimate source, not in any mystic experience or ecstatic vision, but in their intense feeling for the right and the good as these were given in their experience.

The moral confronts us also under the form of a cause that has to be fought for, an end that has to be achieved. It is here that we are to seek the origin of the grand conception of a Kingdom of God. The cause of truth as against falsehood, of justice as against oppression, of mercy as against inhumanity, of peace, brotherhood, and self-forgetting service as against hatred, envy, pride, and self-seeking—there is nothing greater in the world than that. Earth's noblest have laid their lives on its altar, and its triumph has been their dream. It is great enough, worthful enough, to be the cause of God Himself. How the idea of a Kingdom of God gradually disentangled itself from nationalistic limitations and climbed to the peak of spirituality and universality need not be considered here. What we are concerned with is not its history, but its genetic ground.

On what did the prophets support themselves in attributing to God a moral disposition—that He loved righteousness and hated iniquity, was just, merciful,

and forgiving? No doubt all this was implied in their belief that the moral law was the revelation of His will. The moral is one, and each aspect of it involves the other aspects. There is, however, a more direct path to a knowledge of the Divine disposition, and it was this that the prophets took. The hatred of evil, the passion for righteousness, the love of our neighbour, the merciful and forgiving temper, meet us in human hearts as part of the moral reality amid which we move. That in such reality the Divine manifests itself to us is an immediate judgment of faith. Whence did Hosea derive his gospel of Divine compassion—"How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I surrender thee, Israel?"—but from the love and pity for his countrymen that burned in his own breast. Forgiving love met him as a fact, and his faith affirmed its divinity. Sometimes it is contended that Hosea's assurance of the love of God was the primary thing, and that his own passion had in that assurance its source and inspiration. The supernatural revelation of God's character, that is to say, comes first, and man's attempt to imitate follows. But even if some voice heard in an ecstatic rapture, or some scroll written across the sky, proclaimed that God is love, such a proclamation would be entirely meaningless if we had never been up against love as a fact in our human experience. It is the love that has entered into our world and is as unquestionably real as selfishness, not any love we are merely told about, or which we infer from some other fact like the Incarnation, that is the revelation. The ethical development in human life precedes and must precede our conception of God's being and working. Only when we have moral reality before us can our faith, on the ground of its worth, affirm it as Divine.

Finally, the moral presents itself to us under the form of an order regulating human life and ensuring that, ultimately, it is not the evil but the good that shall prevail. The existence of such an order may be described as an *a priori* of faith. In a world that has God at the heart of it, the good must ultimately triumph. But it is something more when we can trace the operations through which the result is brought about. These operations will rank as facts of revelation.

In every society there is some sort of administration of justice which secures with more or less effectiveness that at least certain forms of wrongdoing shall not go unpunished. And always religion has recognized that the civil power in the right exercise of its judicial functions is a minister of God. The order it maintains is part of what we mean by the Divine order. But only a part. Not to speak of its inevitable limitations, human justice not seldom fails or is even turned into injustice. Lord, how long? is a cry that echoes throughout the Psalms. Can we speak of a moral order that is independent of fallible human executors? It is not indeed possible to show that what we call natural law takes account of moral distinctions. If certain forms of vice carry with them physical penalties, it is not as being morally bad, but only as an infringement of hygienic rules. But, surveying the broad field of history, is it not permissible to say that evil sets forces in motion that sooner or later bring a people to disaster? The judgment may not always be spectacular; but there are cases when it is so, and when its meaning can hardly be missed. The Hebrew prophets were not in error when in catastrophes like the fall of Assyria and Babylon, and the collapse of Samaria and Judah, they saw the hand of God lighting in doom. In modern history we

think of the French and Russian Revolutions and the American Civil War. "If we shall suppose," said Lincoln in his second presidential address, "that American slavery is one of those offences which in the Providence of God must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offence came, shall we discern therein any departure from those Divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled up by the bondsmen's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and every drop of blood drawn by the lash shall be paid by another drawn by the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'"

Within the limits of the individual life it is much more difficult to discover the working of retribution, if retribution is understood as essentially suffering. But a man's sin comes back to him and finds him less in what he suffers than in what he misses, and less in its external than in its internal results. It comes back to him in the dulling of the moral intelligence, the deterioration of character, the impairing of the finer sensibilities and energies which are its inevitable consequences. It is only to express the same truth in other words when we say that the real penalty of sin is alienation from God. The soul loses its power to respond to the high, the pure, the generous; moral activity is paralysed, and only the ignoble remains. No external or mechanical order this, but one belonging to the nature of things, and from which

there is no escape. Must we not recognize in it a revelation of the Justice that rules at the heart of being ?

" Justice " is a great word, but we cannot with Carlyle regard it as a full description of the moral world-order. There are aspects of human life and human history that require us to introduce the still greater word " redemption." In the Christian religion the conception of redemption occupies a place of exceeding prominence, and it is of the utmost importance to make clear to ourselves the particular facts on which it rests.

By the Old Testament writers redemptive significance is attached to the series of events which established Israel as a nation and preserved her corporate existence from threatening disaster—the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, the conquest of Canaan, the destruction of Sennacherib's army before Jerusalem, and the restoration from exile. A valid interpretation of history, if we can say, as surely we can, that Israel has made a contribution to the life of humanity of altogether immeasurable importance, and that her disappearance before her work was done would have been an irreparable calamity. And the same significance can be ascribed to events of a similar character among other peoples and in other ages. Marathon, Zama, Chalons, Tours, the defeat of the Armada, Waterloo, the Marne, stand for deliverances that have had a bearing on the destiny of the race.

It is not, however, on stricken fields, but in the domain of man's spiritual life that God's redemptive working comes up before us most unambiguously and in its most distinctive features. When Jeremiah thinks of the greatest that God can do for men he speaks of such a writing of God's law on their hearts as shall make obedience a spontaneous impulse. In every awakening of the individual to life's higher meanings and every mass

movement towards the things that are true, honourable, just, pure, and lovely, faith discerns the presence and working of a redeeming God. And may we not add that intellectual and æsthetic movements, like that which glorified ancient Athens, or the Renaissance, are equally susceptible of such an interpretation? In so far as they make for the enlargement and uplifting of the human spirit they have God behind them, and are an evidence of His redemptive working.

It hardly needs to be repeated that what gives to these facts their revelational character is not causal discontinuity—in other words, miraculousness—but value. When devils are cast out and human souls emancipated and ennobled, when some wilderness becomes a fruitful field and some barren land springs of water, we know that the Spirit has descended from on high. Did the scientific explanation of a psychological or an historical fact rule out the religious, religion would be in a perilous situation indeed. But the two standpoints, although different, are not incompatible. Rather are they complementary.

There is another aspect of that working we call redemptive, as it discloses itself in the field of history, that is of capital importance. It is the use which God has made of exceptionally endowed personalities—the genius, the hero, the prophet, and the saint. One of the most distressing of present-day phenomena is a spurious democratic feeling which resents all superiority and absurdly deifies the average man. Did superiority spell favouritism, one could understand the resentment. But that view of it is superficial and flimsy. God did not give to Homer and Dante and Shakespeare their surpassing genius for their own personal delight, but rather that through their ministry life might be made

happier, fuller, and nobler for the thronging multitude. If history cannot be altogether resolved into the story of the hero, certainly the hero has played in it a part, the importance of which it would be difficult to exaggerate. Particularly is this the case in the domain of religion. One and all the great historical religions have had their rise in the activity of one or more outstanding personalities. Hebraism was the creation of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and their successors, Zoroastrianism of Zoroaster, Buddhism of Gautama, Islam of Mohammed, and Christianity of Jesus. It is God's way of lifting our race to higher levels and enriching its heritage, a genuine way of redemption.

In attempting to analyse the redemptive significance of the prophet or saint, we begin with this, that he is the pioneer in the field of religious knowledge. With a bigger nature and a finer spiritual sensibility than the ordinary good man, he sees clearly and vividly truths to which his contemporaries are blind or only dimly surmise. But once proclaimed, the truths become in time a common possession. We have to distinguish between the original creative thinking of the prophet and that which is merely reproductive, even if we have to add that in both cases it is the same faculty that is in exercise.

But the prophet is more than a pioneer. We have to recall in this connection what was said in the preceding chapter regarding the place of authority in religion. The faith of the many depends in no small measure on that of the elect few. Who does not know the reinforcement that comes in hours of discouragement and wavering from contact with one whose faith is of the far-shining, victorious kind that tramples down all seeming contradictions and dares every sacrifice? The prophet does more than blaze the trail; he is also the helper who

takes us by the hand and adds his strength to our weakness.

So far the significance noted in the prophet has not been in the strict sense revelational, if by revelation we are to understand not the act of apprehending, but the reality to be apprehended. But we can also say that the prophet is himself part of that reality. Every life lived on a higher plane than that of nature does something to make us sensible of a reality that is supernatural and Divine. But in the case of the ordinary good life the motives are too mixed and the devotion too qualified to permit of its producing any marked religious impression. Of a feeling that in it the Kingdom of God has drawn near to us we cannot speak. But are there not lives of which it can be said that this is precisely the impression they produce—lives in which the smaller human interests are overshadowed if not lost in the passion for God, His Kingdom, and His righteousness? An Elijah, an Amos, a Paul, a Luther, are so completely one with the cause they stand for that to be confronted by the man is to be confronted by the cause, and to be made sensible of its obligation. When the prophet appears on the scene, the winds of the Spirit begin to stir and God makes His presence to be felt.

It is only to view the same fact from a different angle when we say that the prophet and the hero embody and bring up before us those great moral values that give to our thought of God its central content. There is no love—to take this value as an illustration—that is not in its measure a manifestation to our faith of the love that burns at the heart of things. But there are many grades of love, rising from what is little more than an animal instinct to the love which St. Paul so wonderfully describes in his first letter to the Corinthians. That of

Hosea for his erring countrymen, in its intensity, its tenderness, and its moral sanctity, was a commanding enough phenomenon to create an epoch in the history of religion. From it men received a new thought of God. To the prophet's own generation, and to many a subsequent generation, it was an authentic fact of revelation.

Hosea may be taken as an illustration of the way in which relatively new values emerge in human life. A man of heroic mould is born into the world who reacts to his environment in a new way. The biologist will speak of a mutation, and may try to bring its appearance under some law. Religion has its own account, which is not at all affected by the biological one. The heroic figure comes to us from the unfathomable depths of being, from the God who wills to reveal Himself, and is building up on this earth a kingdom of the good.

One other aspect of the world-order as redemptive has yet to be noticed. Almost with the regularity of a law of nature, the men who have done most and greatest for our race in the spiritual domain, more particularly the pioneers, have been called to pass through the furnace of suffering. We think of Ancient Israel, doomed to the agony of conquest and exile, of Jeremiah, of the Christian martyrs—the seed of the Church, Tertullian called them—and, above all, of Jesus. To religious thought this fact has always presented itself in the light of a problem. The first to face the problem and offer a solution was the author of the Servant passages in the Book of Isaiah. His solution was in terms of the traditional recompense idea. Like all suffering, that endured by Israel was punishment, only it was inflicted by God, not on account of her own sin, but on account of the sin of others, and with the design that these others, their sin thus vicariously expiated, should become the object of Divine forgiveness

and healing. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." How this idea of vicarious punishment was in different ways elaborated by Paul, Anselm, Grotius, and many more into theories of the Christian redemption cannot be told here. Nor shall we undertake any criticism of these theories. Enough to say that the undoubted fact that the heroic moral figures of history have generally drunk deep of the cup of suffering, and that their sufferings have been a factor in bringing about the triumph of their cause, can be explained in a much simpler and more convincing way. With their keen moral sensibility, and throwing themselves as they did in the teeth of the hypocrisies, vices, and prejudices of their time, these men could not be other than sufferers. Had their experience of hostility, persecution, and disillusionment, as well it might have done, silenced their testimony, undermined their faith, and turned their love into hatred, it would have been far indeed from exhibiting redemptive virtue. What redeems is not suffering in itself, but the might of fidelity, love, and faith which it can evoke.

In analysing the significance of great personalities in the scheme of Divine revelation we have so far left out of account the supreme personality of all history. If we have reserved this subject to the close, it is because in the faith of the Church Jesus occupies, and we believe rightly occupies, a place apart. That in Him revelation finds its crown, practically all who bear His name are agreed. When, however, we proceed to ask what it is gives Him His pre-eminence, the region of agreement is left behind.

The traditional view that the Christian knowledge of God is bound up with the great doctrines in which the person and work of Jesus are interpreted, that revelation and doctrine are equivalent terms, we have already given reasons for rejecting. Doctrine is not an ultimate of religion, as revelation is. Behind the doctrines about Jesus stands Jesus Himself in His historical reality. That the doctrines are secondary and of the nature of philosophical speculations does not mean that they are destitute of Christian content. Of at least those of the Incarnation and the Atonement we can say that if they are not to be identified with the Christian revelation or gospel, they embody it or part of it. How otherwise is the religious response which " the old, old story " has awakened throughout the centuries to be explained ? That the God who hates and judges sin forgives the sinner, that in Jesus He approaches us in the power of His holiness and His love, and that our spiritual heritage comes to us consecrated by shed blood—all this receives in the traditional conception of the Atonement, whatever we may think of the forensic logic, vivid and dramatic expression. But while the doctrines embody cardinal Christian ideas, they are not their source. What is new in the Christian conception of God has its ground, not in the story of the Incarnation and the Atonement, but in the personality of Jesus as disclosed in His life and teaching. It is the moral grandeur of Jesus, the stainless purity of His soul, the tenderness of His pity, the largeness of His generosity, love, and self-sacrifice, the might of His faith, that have operated as a redemptive force of incalculable magnitude and given to our thought of God a new content. In the historical reality we find a depth of meaning and a reserve of power which no doctrine about that reality can approach.

Taking this standpoint, we must suppose that the significance of Jesus is not different in kind but only in degree from that of other personalities through whom God has acted in a revealing and saving way. Traditional theology is governed by the reverse assumption. Jesus is represented as doing what none other could even in part do. He divinized our human nature, paid the penalty our sin entailed, and revealed the Father in virtue of a superhuman knowledge belonging to Him as the eternal Son. He sent from heaven the gift of the Holy Spirit, and He intercedes for us before God. But it is easy to see that this resort to unique categories inevitably involves a descent from the moral standpoint to one that is physical, legal, or mythological. And so far from glorifying Jesus, it casts over Him the shadow of unreality. In its tendency it is essentially docetic. Particularly docetic is the treatment of Jesus' consciousness of God as something superhuman, a mystery which we cannot and must not attempt to penetrate. Jesus is thereby separated from humanity at the vital point; and His revelation of God, detached from its ethical ground, becomes purely external, dependent for its convincingness on its authoritative character. If there is one thing that stands out in the Gospel story it is that Jesus' knowledge of God was, like ours, a faith knowledge. We think of His manner of teaching, with its appeals to the facts of nature and the love in human hearts, of His temptations, His struggle in Gethsemane, and His cry of dereliction on the Cross. This surely is an essential part of His greatness and His power to move us, that living in the world in which our lot is cast and confronted by its darkest mysteries, disillusionments, and tragedies, He was able, with no other avenue of knowledge than that open to us, to discern the presence and working of a

God who is the Father and Saviour of men, and to maintain with that God an unbroken fellowship.

Our analysis of the significance of Jesus must therefore proceed on the lines which have already been laid down. Jesus is the supreme Pioneer in the field of religious knowledge. In the unerring clearness of His moral judgments and the intensity of His feeling for moral reality He stands in history unapproached and unapproachable. He is the incarnate conscience of mankind ; and one cannot come into earnest contact with Him without experiencing a clarifying of the moral vision and a new sense of God. Jesus has given us a religion which in its essentials is not one among others, but religion itself. Time elements like the belief in the imminence of a world catastrophe, in the activity of demons, and in eternal punishment, are no doubt mixed up with it ; but in its essence it stands above time. Beyond Jesus' faith and love and hope we have no outlook.

Attempts have been made to show that most, if not all, of His ethico-religious conceptions were anticipated in the Old Testament, in the later Judaism, or in paganism. His achievement, it is asserted, consisted rather in selecting the best of what was current than in creating the new. In this there is a certain grain of truth. Certainly Jesus made His own what was highest in the Old Testament and in the teaching of His time. And perhaps it is never possible to say of an ethical conception that here or there it dawned for absolutely the first time on the human mind. Always, if our knowledge were sufficient, we should find more or less clear anticipations. But granting this, the very last term to be applied to Jesus is that of eclectic. His teaching is patently the outcome of His own spiritual perceptions, welling up from the depths of His soul like water from a spring. And it has

the inner consistency and the uniqueness of His personality. Where in all history, as Harnack asks, shall we find a message about God and the good of such purity and earnestness and so instinct with life and power?

The second element in Jesus' significance is His faith in God. It is of the kind that can remove mountains. Whatever may be thought of the practicableness of His commandments to refrain from resisting evil, to turn the other cheek, and to give to every one who asks, these commandments are at least a proof of His absolute confidence in the good as the ultimate reality and power in the universe, and the one thing that can in the end subdue and destroy evil. In the darkness of Gethsemane, with the fair structure of His hopes crashing about Him, He could look up to God and say, "Father, not what I will, but what thou wilt." And should we not prize the cry of dereliction in His last agony as an evidence that what we witness is no mythological drama, but a human soul battling for its faith in the face of what seemed an overwhelming catastrophe? The faith of Jesus in itself and apart from what was new in its content was a reality potent enough to mark an epoch in religion. Throughout the centuries, countless thousands, in hours when duty has seemed hard, the burden of mystery and suffering intolerable, and God far off, have felt its touch and received power to obey and endure and believe.

Again, in a degree which is altogether unique, Jesus is one with the Kingdom of righteousness, truth, and love which He proclaimed. Everywhere and always, in word and in deed, He stands for the Kingdom. Private interests, a private life, He has none. Even His relation to His family is thrust quite into the background. "Who is my mother and who are my brethren? Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven,

he is my brother and sister and mother." So much His high vocation required of Him, and so much He spontaneously rendered. To follow Jesus and to seek the Kingdom and righteousness of God are not two things but one, as He Himself in effect declared. Jesus is the leader of mankind in the highest things, the one figure in all history whom we can follow without reserve.

Finally, Jesus as none other embodies in His life those great moral realities in which God reveals Himself to us and lays His hand upon us. When we try to frame some conception of the Divine holiness, it is the stainless purity of Jesus' soul, His apartness from all that defiles, and His native, untroubled goodness that rise before us. The world has never been without shining examples of the love that cherishes the good and forgets self in the service of others. Already we have spoken of the passion of Hosea for his sinning countrymen and of its significance for religion. For all such manifestations of the Divine we thank God. It is no depreciation of them to say that in the gospel story we are brought face to face with something more transcendent. We have not known love in its height and depth and sacrifice, nor all that the love of God signifies, until we have looked into the soul of Jesus, followed His ministry among the weary and the lost, and stood by His Cross. And is it not just this combination in Jesus' personality of apartness from and hatred of evil, and of a love that goes out to seek and save, that makes men feel that in Him God has come to them at once in His justice and in His mercy, and that awakens within them penitence and peace? One more illustration of this aspect of Jesus' significance. Not infrequently Jesus thinks of God as the great Giver who pours out His gifts with a royal generosity and without asking whether the recipient is worthy or whether

he will show gratitude. And He points to the rain and the sunshine as the evidences of this uncalculating grace. But the rain and the sunshine would hardly in themselves have suggested it had we never had experience of the generosity that dwells in human breasts. The human generosity is the primary revelation. And where shall we find it in such royalty, "hoping for nothing again," and dispensing such benefits as in Him who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many?

With the formulas that have been employed to describe the significance of Jesus we are not at this point concerned. What concerns us here are the facts upon which the formulas, so far as they are true and adequate, are built. Summing up, we can say that in Jesus we find a religion we can believe, a leader we can follow—one whose faith supports ours—and the presence and working of the living God as the God of our salvation. Only with respect to the last need anything more be said.

Catholic theology speaks of the beatific vision as the goal of religion, to which, however, only the blessed attain. This conception is a mystical one, and like mysticism in general, rests on the idea that in His essential being God transcends every predicate derived from the world of our experience. The fallacy of mysticism has already been pointed out. A more intimate knowledge of God than that given to us in His Kingdom and His righteousness is a vain quest. Where love is, where purity, justice, mercy, generosity, the spirit of self-forgetting service are, there God is. And what we call an experience of God is in large part an experience of the power of these values, when received into our life, to fill it with meaning, strength, and joy, to lift it up and glorify it. In them God comes to us, and through

them He acts upon us to awaken the response of faith. A manifestation of God that transcends the ethical is an empty dream. To conceive of God as acting in a physical or quasi-physical way, as in the traditional conception of grace, is to make Him deal with us not as persons but as things. Now it is in Jesus that the values of the Kingdom of the good meet us in their purest and grandest form. Jesus is not only touched with the Divine, as many are; He is all Divine. The Divine constitutes the whole content of His human life. And therefore it is that Jesus makes upon us a unique impression, the impression that in Him as in none other God has come to us, to disclose to us His inmost heart, to condemn our sin, to call us to His service, and to create within us the life that is life indeed.

CHAPTER V

SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION

FROM three sides—that of science, that of philosophy, and that of religion—a knowledge or interpretation of the world is offered us. Unfortunately the three interpretations have by no means been always consistent with one another. No sooner did a genuine science appear on the field than it found itself at issue with religion; the strife has continued throughout the centuries, and if to-day it has abated, it would be too much to say that a final agreement has been reached. And philosophy and religion, if occasionally allies, have far oftener been rivals or even antagonists. Yet all three have their indubitable right. That any of them should disappear or be reduced to a position of subjection to the others is unthinkable. And since knowledge is ultimately one, some way of adjusting their competing claims there must be. It must be possible so to delimit their spheres as that conflict shall be avoided, and the three interpretations appear not as competitive but as supplementary. Particularly is religion interested in reaching an understanding with its sister activities. For its own safety it must know its proper domain, and where that domain ends. It must know when to stand fast by its affirmations and when to recognize that another authority must speak the decisive word. From a lack of this knowledge it has in the past been led into

many false positions and suffered many humiliations. We begin with the relation between religion and science.

Already we have seen that the world exhibits itself under two aspects—as a causal system and as a system of values—and that it is the first that constitutes the domain of science. Science takes to do with reality as a causal system in which every event follows its antecedent according to an invariable law—in other words, as a piece of causal mechanism. Its task is to discover causal uniformities and to carry causal explanation to its farthest limits. Whether the world is not something more than mechanism, whether it has not a meaning, mechanism being the instrument of a reality higher than itself, is a question which science does not raise. With a teleological explanation of things it is not concerned; and the scientist rightly refuses to accept such an explanation as a substitute for a causal one. It is not a scientific account of the advent of an epidemic to say that it has been sent as a punishment for sin or as a moral discipline, or of the colours of a rainbow that the Creator works in beauty. The scientist will speak of bacilli and their conveyance, and of the refraction of light by the falling raindrops. That the world exhibits in marvellous profusion the adaptation of means to ends—the eye for seeing, the hand for grasping, the structure of the flower for securing cross-fertilization—he cannot and does not deny. But in accounting for adaptation he has resort, not to purpose or design, but solely to the phenomenal antecedents. He fits it into the mechanistic framework.

In his use of the scientific method of research—the method of observation and experiment, hypothesis and verification—the scientist proceeds on two assumptions. He assumes that all reality that comes within our experi-

ence has its mechanistic side, that the world in all its parts is a world of law. The history of science is the story of the conquest of one region after another—that of the inorganic, the phenomena of life, and last, the phenomena of mind. Mind has a mechanism, ordered sequences which may be discovered, just as much as the stellar system, otherwise psychology would not be a science.

The second assumption on which the scientist proceeds is that the reign of law is not only universal but uninterrupted. This is what is meant by the principle of the uniformity of nature. The ordered sequence of cause and effect is not liable to interference by incalculable forces acting from outside the system. Everywhere and always the same phenomenal causes will be followed by the same effects. It is only on this assumption that scientific investigation is possible. To science, miracle in the traditional sense of the term, as a contravention or suspension of natural law, is absolutely inadmissible. Suppose it reported that a man by the exercise of religious faith had succeeded in walking upon the surface of a lake. The scientist would require in the first place that the alleged fact should be experimentally verified, and under such conditions as precluded the possibility of deception or illusion. Should it sustain this test, it would still not be for him a miracle, but only a fact the causal explanation of which had so far not been discovered. Telepathy, could we regard it as established, would be a parallel case.

That the principle of the uniformity of nature assumed by the scientist in all his investigations is insusceptible of complete verification, vast tracts of reality being unexplored and indeed beyond the reach of exploration, is true. But while it remains an assumption, it is one that has behind it a huge mass of experience, and that is

uncontradicted by anything the scientist would regard as verified fact.

If science takes to do with the world in its mechanistic aspect, what concerns religion is its value aspect. That the world is a piece of mechanism religion is not concerned to deny; but it affirms and is bound to affirm that it is more than mechanism. Viewing the world from the standpoint of value, it discovers in it meaning and purpose, glory, wonder, and beauty. Its method of interpretation is not that of hypothesis and verification, but is rooted in our feeling for values. On the ground of their worth it establishes truth, beauty, and goodness, establishes Spirit, at the centre of things, and treats the causal system as the medium and instrument of a kingdom of ends or worths.

Between these two aspects of reality there is no necessary contradiction. The mechanistic interpretation is not incompatible with the teleological, nor the teleological with the mechanistic. Both have their indubitable right, although how they are connected with one another in the unity of a single whole may remain a problem. In a complete account of reality both must be included.

It would seem, then, that the terms of a concordat between science and religion should not be difficult to arrange. Each has but to confine itself within its own domain, science exploiting the mechanistic aspect of existence and religion the value aspect. Unfortunately not all who speak in the name of science nor all who speak in the name of religion are prepared to accept such a delimitation of spheres. By each side claims are advanced which the other cannot grant; and in order to understand the long and bitter conflict it is necessary to consider for a moment what these claims are and whether they are legitimate.

Not a few, speaking in the name of science—we may take Haeckel as a typical example—claim that the mechanistic aspect of reality is not only an unquestionable aspect, but the only one. Guiding ideas and purposes are rejected, and the world reduced to a series of physical, chemical, and electrical processes capable of being summed up in a mathematical formula. At bottom the world is a machine—that and nothing more. The gulf between nature and mind is bridged by the reduction of the mental sciences to the terms of natural science. Behaviourism undertakes to show that all mental processes can be explained on physical principles. Concepts like consciousness, self, spirit, will, are dismissed as empty and meaningless, and human activity reduced to the two factors of stimulus and response, both interpreted in terms of physical science. The Behaviourist, according to one of the school, granted the postulates of the physical sciences, "can show how the phenomena of mind may arise within a system which has no other attributes than those which the physicist ascribes to his phenomenological world." Even to-day there are writers who speak of mind as if it were a function of the brain, a form of physical energy in the same series with light, heat, and electricity. And where this view is rejected as too absurd, the psychical is treated as a mere phosphorescent glow on the surface of the physical, an epiphenomenon without any real spontaneity or efficiency. Only to the physical is efficiency conceded.

The incompatibleness of such a reading of the universe with religious faith does not need to be pointed out. Were science committed to it, any sort of compact with religion would be impossible. Happily it is not science that speaks here, but only a naturalistic philosophy masquerading in its dress. It is not science but natural-

istic philosophy that is the sworn enemy of religion. In the principles of science there is nothing that requires it to regard the mechanistic aspect of reality as the only aspect. The most that science can say is that a teleological or value reading of the world does not fall within its province, that it has to do not with final, but only with proximate causes. And science is within its rights when it carries in every field mechanistic explanation to its limit. What it must not do is to assume in the teeth of the facts that such explanation has no limit.

We say in the teeth of the facts, for there is not a single department of reality from which the conception of design or purpose can be eliminated. If mechanism is universal, there is always an element that transcends mechanism. Studying the course of inorganic evolution in its isolation, it might seem possible to account for it without introducing any but mechanical factors. But restored to its setting as part of a larger scheme which includes the story of living organisms, such a hypothesis becomes absolutely incredible. Regarding the adaptation of our earth's atmosphere to the support of life, Professor Henderson of Harvard writes as follows: "There is in truth not one chance in countless millions that the many unique properties of carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen, and especially of their stable compounds, water and carbonic acid, which chiefly make up the atmosphere of a new planet, should simultaneously occur in the elements other than through the operation of a natural law which somehow connects them together. . . . The connection between these properties of the elements, almost infinitely improbable as the result of contingency, can only be regarded, is in truth only fully intelligible, even if mechanically explained, as a preparation for the evolutionary process. . . . Therefore the properties

of the elements must for the present be regarded as possessing a teleological character." [1]

In the organic domain the fact of teleology is still more arresting, striking every eye. Here indeed mechanical explanation, so successful elsewhere, seems to break down hopelessly. The attempt to analyse living organisms into physical and chemical mechanism, J. S. Haldane characterizes as probably the most colossal failure in the whole history of modern science; and he cites the organic processes of nutrition, secretion, growth, reproduction, and reparation as defying such analysis. Whether, however, this failure — which is not quite absolute—justifies Haldane, Driesch, J. A. Thomson, and others in postulating in living organisms the activity of an entelechy or purposive vital force is another matter. Such a force, since we are ignorant of its nature—for it is regarded as something else than mind, a sort of middle term between the psychical and physical — explains nothing. Moreover, it is hazardous to assume that what biological science has so far largely failed to accomplish it can never accomplish. Vital processes may well have their mechanistic explanation; but what has to be noted is that this explanation, even when carried to its limit, leaves the teleological character of the processes unexplained. In the phenomena of life, and, we can add, of its evolution even more patently than in the phenomena of the inorganic, there is an element which science must recognize as inaccessible to its methods. If there is mechanism, there is a reality which transcends mechanism.

In the case of psychical phenomena the same thing is true. Often enough our actions are determined mechanically, by the direct action of a stimulus, by the

[1] Quoted by Beckwith, *The Idea of God*, p. 133.

force of habit, or by the dominant motive. In this field science is completely at home. But not all our actions are of the mechanical kind. In the case of a conflict of motives, the self can intervene to measure these motives by the standard of right and wrong, and to determine which shall prevail. In this entrance of the self as the decisive factor we have something which cannot be treated, without destroying its distinctive character, as no more than an additional cog in the psychical machine. And as we can speak of the freedom of the will, we can also speak of the freedom of the mind. In reverie idea follows idea in accordance with the laws of association, the psychical mechanism carrying us along. But how when the self by an act of attention measures an idea or a combination of ideas by the standard of true and false and gives to the train of thought a fresh direction? Here also mechanistic explanation finds itself up against a limit.[1]

Happily the leading representatives of modern science are foremost in insisting on the limitation of its technique, and that its view of reality is only a partial view. Even of matter and energy, not to speak of mind, they do not pretend to give any final account. "Our consciousness," writes Eddington, "has presented to us for examination a number of apparently disconnected entities—the *matter* which we see and handle, the *stress* which we feel in our muscles, the *interval* of time which we appreciate in our consciousness of the flight of time. Physics has examined what underlies these facts of consciousness, and has shown how each depends on the other, and is definable in terms of the other, reducing all to a unity. . . The chain of connection of the entities of the world is the province of physics, but the intrinsic essence

[1] Otto, *Naturalism and Religion*, p. 317 ff.

of those entities is now recognized to lie outside its province." [1]

From a science that recognizes the limitation of its outlook religion has nothing to fear. If it does not lend to the religious interpretation of the world direct support, it leaves the field open for it—one might even say, stretches a hand towards it.

While illegitimate claims advanced in the name of science have been one cause of the controversy between science and religion, they have not been the only one. From the side of religion claims have been urged which science has refused, and rightly refused, to entertain. Down to comparatively recent times the Bible was treated by religious people as the final authority in all matters with which it dealt, its pronouncements on scientific questions being regarded as equally infallible with its pronouncements on questions of faith and morals. If it taught that the world was some six thousand years old and was created in six days, that our earth is the centre of the stellar system, that man was fashioned out of the dust of the earth, that the diversity of human speech had its origin in the building of the tower of Babel, and that diseases like insanity and epilepsy are due to demonic possession, the scientist was guilty of heresy when he challenged its statements. With this position we need not deal at length, since it has been abandoned by practically every one. To-day we recognize that what science is to be found in the Bible is only of the rudimentary kind current at the time when the Bible was written, and that it has long ago become antiquated.

It may be remarked, however, that the resistance offered by religious people to the Copernican astronomy,

[1] *Science, Religion, and Reality*, p. 206.

the evolution cosmology, and the theory of man's animal descent was not wholly or even mainly due to the doctrine of a verbally inspired Bible. These conceptions seemed to strike a mortal blow at vital Christian convictions. How was the story of redemption credible if man's habitation was only a speck of dust in an outlying corner of the universe? How could the world be God's handiwork if it was the product of blindly operating forces? How could man be the child of God, the bearer of His image, if he has sprung from the animal tribe? For the Psalmist, said Carlyle, man is a little lower than the angels; for the scientist, he is a little higher than the apes. In the past religion was bound up with what we may call an *a priori* science, the working of God in creation and providence being interpreted according to human analogy and antecedent expectation. In the absence of real scientific knowledge no other course was open. And this *a priori* science lent itself admirably to the religious interpretation. At the same time religion was thereby involved in a series of crises; for one by one the antecedent expectations were rendered untenable by a more objective and exact study of the facts. Even in Bible times it was discovered that the traditional idea of the equivalence of desert and lot had to be surrendered. What a strain its surrender put upon religion let the Book of Job witness. The truth is that in the domain of science religion has no rights whatever. Our faith affirmations do not at all enable us to decide the manner in which God works in creation, providence, and grace, fulfilling His high designs. For such knowledge we have to wait on a patient investigation of the facts. When science has reached assured results, the one course open for religion is to adjust itself to them. How difficult a matter it has been for it to

make the adjustments repeatedly demanded, every one knows. But that they have in the end been effected—even the Darwinian theory is scarcely any longer a stumbling-block—should confirm us in the confidence that no discovery that science may make will prove to be ultimately irreconcilable with our Christian faith.

To-day the claim of religion to a right in the field of science is practically narrowed down to a single point. By not a few it is still maintained that science must leave room for miracle in the traditional sense of an occasional suspension or interruption of natural law by the direct action of Deity. So much, they contend, our belief in a living God demands. That science cannot but refuse this demand we have seen, and also that faith does not carry with it any *a priori* knowledge as to the manner of the Divine working. Recognizing this, some theologians, while retaining the idea of miracle, have interpreted it in such a way as to avoid collision with science. Miracle, they say, is not to be understood as a breach of natural law, but as the overriding of a lower law by a higher, of which we can in the present state of our knowledge give no account.

The reciprocal relations of religion and philosophy present a more complex problem. In this case it is only in part that we can speak of a delimitation of spheres, for the central quest is the same in both. Like religion and unlike science, philosophy seeks to penetrate to ultimate reality and to read the riddle of existence. It will answer the questions what the universe at bottom is and what it signifies.

If the attempt to distinguish between the two activities by assigning them separate spheres breaks down at the

central point, it might seem as if we were thrown back on a difference with respect to method. How religion reaches its interpretation, we have seen: it is by discriminating between values and affirming the highest as the ultimately real. Does philosophy employ a different method, pursue another path? In his book on *Moral Values* Sorley seems to say that it does. While contending that moral values are included in the real, and have validity for conscious beings, he denies the legitimacy of the argument from value for us to value for the universe. Our right to speak of values as the meaning which the world expresses in its temporal process depends, he insists, on our ability to fit them, along with the causal order, into a coherent system, to show that things and laws on the one hand, and persons and values on the other, harmonize so as together to make a unity. To achieve this synthesis is philosophy's central task. Philosophy reaches its interpretation of the world by the path of the synoptic view, by thinking things together.

That this account of its method contains a very large element of truth we shall see presently. But it has one grave defect. Philosophy is regarded as from the bottom upward a purely theoretical enterprise. Its interpretation of reality is presented in the light of a hypothesis, on the same level with those of science, which is to be accepted or rejected according to its ability or inability to colligate all the relevant facts. But outside Naturalism, which deliberately ignores the value aspect of existence, there is no philosophy which maintains towards the world this wholly objective and theoretical attitude. The philosophic thinker approaches the facts with certain assumptions or antecedent convictions in his mind. He brings with him the conviction that the world when rightly understood will turn out to be a connected whole,

a cosmos, and not a chaos. He brings with him the further conviction that it is at bottom spiritual and that it has a meaning. In most cases he assumes that it is at heart moral, or at least that it harmonizes with our moral perceptions. On such antecedent convictions every idealistic philosophy is based, and by them its fundamental character is determined. And one and all they are rooted in the feeling for values. The truth is, that every philosophy outside Naturalism is also a religion, some sort of religious faith finding expression in it.

It was this that was in the mind of William James when he emphasized the pragmatic character of philosophy. "A philosophy," he writes, "is the expression of a man's intimate character, and all definitions of the universe are but the deliberately adapted reactions of human character upon it." [1] A man's character, what is that but his settled valuations? And it is the application of these valuations to the universe that gives him at once his religion and his philosophy. The systems of the great speculative thinkers like Plato, Plotinus, Bruno, Spinoza, Hegel, are in truth instinct with religious feeling. Plato's conception of a world of eternal, perfect, and changeless ideas standing over against the sadly imperfect and ever-changing world of sense, and the source of whatever reality the latter possesses, was no mere working hypothesis, but a prophetic vision, the goal of his aspiration, a veritable kingdom of heaven for which he sighed. In it he found the satisfaction of his religious needs, poorly enough ministered to by the popular religion of his time. Spinoza has sometimes been described as an atheist, but with far greater truth as God-intoxicated. His feelings towards the world as it

[1] *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 20.

mirrors itself in his thought are genuinely religious. That Spinozistic world, to most of us so cold and forbidding, was to its author the home of the highest values, and a place where he could live freely and gladly.

If at bottom philosophy represents a faith, there is of course no relevancy, so far as this aspect of it is concerned, in setting it with some above religion, or with others below it. And this has to be kept in mind when, as not infrequently happens, the two are put in opposition to each other as rival authorities. In cases of conflict it is not a matter of philosophy as against religion, but of one faith as against another. We have a perfect right to reject a speculative system that fails to do justice to the values we hold sacred, even if we are not in a position to pull it to pieces as a theoretical construction.

Are we then to regard philosophy and religion as one and the same thing? Some have been ready to answer in the affirmative. "Philosophy," writes Hegel, "is in fact worship, it is religion; philosophy is thus identical with religion." And his modern disciple Croce repeats the assertion. But this identification of the two is unjust to both. It is unjust to religion, which it treats as popular philosophizing; and to philosophy, as failing to note and emphasize its distinctive task. Into all philosophy there enters, in addition to the religious element, an element that is essentially theoretical. Not content with affirming the subjection of nature to spirit, of mechanism to teleology, philosophy proceeds, as Sorley rightly points out, to show how the two realms articulate so as to constitute together an organic whole. It will make the inner structure of the universe transparent to thought, thus satisfying the theoretical interest. In this its distinctive aspect, philosophy has its kinship with science, both representing a synthetic activity.

Where the two differ is in the scope of their syntheses. While that undertaken by science leaves the value aspect of reality out of account, that of philosophy recognizes no such limitation. The philosophic synthesis is not partial but universal. "He who recognizes," writes Windelband, "the significance of the two world-orders under which we stand must see in the final unity which thought requires for both the highest problem of philosophy, and in the philosophy of religion concentrate on the question how the world of laws and the world of worths, the kingdom of the must and the kingdom of the shall, are combined in a supreme spiritual unity."[1] To integrate all our knowledge, from whatever source derived, and exhibit the universe as a spiritual unity—that is a task sufficiently ambitious! Every attempt to accomplish it has been baffled, system after system having been more or less wrecked on the rocks of rebellious facts; but always the task has been resumed, and it will never, one ventures to say, be finally abandoned.

While philosophy in its speculative aspect is thus something different from religion, it has to be added that there is no historical religion on which it has not left its mark. Without exception every historical religion includes speculative elements. Not infrequently the speculative material is in the form of myth. The myth—we may take as an example the Genesis story of the Fall—is just imaginative, uncontrolled, pre-scientific speculation. When the mythological way of regarding things yields to the scientific, the myth is understood as poetry, and with hardly any sacrifice of its religious appeal.

Religions differ widely with respect to the amount of speculative material they contain. In the Old Testament it is comparatively small; and some have thanked God

[1] *Preludien*, Eng. trans., p. 25.

that the Hebrew genius did not run to mythology or metaphysic. But it is by no means absent. The Old Testament has the rudiments of a cosmology and of a philosophy of history. It has its conception of how God transacts with the world, its Messianic idea, its idea of the Spirit of Yahweh, and its doctrine of the atoning efficacy of undeserved suffering. Even the teaching of Jesus, although uninfluenced by the contemporary philosophy of the schools, is more than a series of faith judgments. To mention only one thing, it is set in the framework of the apocalyptic world-view, a world-view which is not less speculative than that of Plato or Plotinus. How large a place the speculative occupies in Christianity, and indeed in the New Testament, every student knows. The very Apostle who spoke contemptuously of philosophy as the "wisdom of this world," drew freely upon it, and constructed one of the most impressive and widely influential speculative systems that the world has seen. As has already been pointed out, and will be shown more fully in a later chapter, Christian doctrine is nothing else than a speculative structure reared on a basis of religious experience. This combination of the religious and the philosophical is hardly a matter for surprise. Rather must it be regarded as inevitable. Is not the religious man also more or less of a thinker, moved by the impulse to explain and to synthetize?

An alliance of religion with philosophy, wider or narrower in its scope, is thus, whatever we may think of it, an unquestionable fact. Is religion thereby helped or hindered? Are the gifts of philosophy genuine, or are they like the wooden horse, filled with armed men, which the Greeks presented to the Trojans? Of the Ritschlian theology it is one of the outstanding features that it denounces the alliance as injurious to religion's

real interests. Our faith-affirmations, Ritschl maintained, must be preserved in their purity, unmixed with speculations regarding the metaphysical nature of Deity or the structure of the universe. And he demanded a thoroughgoing revision of Christian doctrine from this standpoint. Christology, for example, must be completely purged of the leaven of the Logos conception. A far-reaching demand, as one can see. It may help us to come to some decision on this question if we pass in brief review the contributions which philosophy has made to religion in the past, and still makes, and try to assess their value.

1. Confronted by theories of the world subversive of faith, religion has uniformly called philosophy or philosophic reflection to its aid, seeking from it an apologetic. Resources within itself it doubtless has. The religious man, when unable to meet a hostile theory on its own ground and demonstrate its theoretical untenability, can fall back on the inner assurance of faith: "I know whom I have believed." Miserable indeed would be his situation if he were at the mercy of every hostile argument he was not in a position to refute. But while this is true, it is also true that unrefuted anti-religious theories are a constant menace to faith. There can be no security for us while our faith points in one direction and our intellect in another. Theories subversive of religion must be met and vanquished on their own ground; bad philosophy must be countered by better. And in the main philosophy of the idealistic type has been able to furnish what has been asked of it. One or two illustrations may help to make clear the kind of service it has rendered.

In our time religion has found its most aggressive and dangerous speculative foe in Naturalism. What

Naturalism stands for we have already seen. The world is viewed as at bottom nothing more than a piece of physical mechanism, the spiritual, even when not reduced to the terms of the physical, being stripped of all real causal and cosmic significance. Behind this wonderful universe with its infinite variety, its endless adaptations, its miracle of life, behind the human drama with its glory and its shame, Naturalism recognizes nothing but matter and energy in endless transformation. Such an account of things religion peremptorily dismisses as an outrage on our sense of values. Viewing it from another angle, philosophy calls in question its theoretical adequacy. As a causal explanation of the manifold world of our experience, the naturalistic hypothesis, it will show, breaks down hopelessly.

One illustration of its work in this direction has already been under consideration. To have shown the limitation of the scientific technique, that Naturalism has no title to speak in the name of science, and that its account of the world is wrecked on the fact of teleology, and of the freedom of the will and the intellect, is obviously the achievement of philosophic reflection. What we have is the characteristic synoptic view.

There is another line of criticism that bears a more metaphysical character. The question is raised, whether the world can have any existence apart from and out of relation to a percipient mind. Granted for the moment that the primary or mathematical qualities of matter, such as size and shape, are purely objective, in the sense that there is no mental element in their constitution, and that they exist apart from mind exactly as we perceive them, so much cannot, obviously, be said of the value or tertiary qualities. Value, as we have shown in our third chapter, is a thing that has reality only

when there is a subject that appreciates it. Are the secondary qualities—colour, taste, smell, temperature—any more objective, any more independent of a perceiving subject? It is hard to make out that they are. Colour and heat are not in the material objects, but in us who are affected by these objects. In the strictest sense they are mental facts or experiences. All we can attribute to the material objects are vibrations of a certain frequency; and it is this that colour and heat signify for the physicist. The bearing of these considerations on the question at issue is obvious. If the real world is the world as we experience it—a world of colour and warmth, of glory and beauty—it is dependent on mind for its very existence. Mind is not, as Naturalism asserts, a mere epiphenomenon; it is organic to the world, something apart from which there would be no world worth the name, nothing more than a system of ether strains or vibrations. Would even that much remain? One might argue with Berkeley, Green, and others that the primary qualities of matter are no more independent of a thinking subject than the secondary: equally with the secondary we can conceive of them only as an object for thought. Of a world that stands in no relation to thought we know and can know nothing.

Naturalism is, of course, not the only system that conflicts with fundamental affirmations of Christian faith. There is Absolutism, with its conception of an impersonal mind which contains within itself the whole universe of persons and things as moments of its infinite being—a mind eternally perfect and complete, with no unachieved ends or unsatisfied desires. Here also religious criticism has to be supplemented by theoretical, if our faith and our intellect are not to be at war. It is the task of philosophical reflection to bring out the

implications of the system, and to show that it fails to account or find a place for indubitable facts like the existence of evil, the consciousness on man's part of a certain independence and freedom, and our sense of the reality of human history as a drama in which real issues are at stake and real decisions registered.

The importance for religion of such services will hardly be questioned. Not a few have been or are haunted by the dread that the naturalistic hypothesis may turn out to be theoretically irresistible. Its simplicity and its apparently scientific character give it a perennial appeal. It means much to us to have it demonstrated that what outrages our faith is also untenable to our intellect. A stumbling-block is removed from faith's path.

In the service just noted, philosophy contributes nothing, at least directly, to the structure of religion. It only strikes down a foe. But contributions to the structure of historical religion it has always made, and to these we now turn.

2. Before the eyes of the greatest Christian thinkers there has floated the impressive idea of a Christian philosophy—a philosophy which should build the affirmations of our faith along with all our other knowledge into a connected and systematic whole. This idea Origen attempted to realize in the third century, and, after a long interval, Aquinas and the mediæval schoolmen. In the heyday of German Idealism, not a few were ready to acclaim the Hegelian system as a final achievement of the dream, and the beginning of a new era for Christianity. That a universal synthesis on a Christian basis, were it only in the field, would lend a powerful support to religion, few will be disposed to deny. It would not, indeed, render faith unnecessary, super-

seding it by demonstrated knowledge. No speculative synthesis is even remotely susceptible of the rigid verification which science requires of its hypotheses. We are never in a position to prove that our synthesis is the only possible one. But even so, it would be a wonderful thing for faith to have behind it the whole force of the intellect.

How gladly would the present writer draw the attention of his readers to such a Christian philosophy! But, alas! there is none that has come under his notice. The thing is still in the world of dreams. And at the present time, belief in its possibility has shrunk to a minimum. We are too deeply sensible of the impenetrable mysteries that encompass us on every hand, the clouds and darkness that are about the throne of the Eternal. Ambitious philosophies that undertake to explain everything are at a discount. Our conviction that the world of forms must receive its final explanation from the world of values indicates, to use the words of Lotze, "only an ultimate and furthest goal that may give our thoughts their direction. It does not indicate knowledge that can be formulated as a demonstrable doctrine. A chasm that cannot be filled, or that has not been filled, divides the world of values from the world of forms. The unity is a matter of faith, not of science." [1]

What we expect from philosophy to-day is far less a universal synthesis than suggestive ideas and viewpoints which will enable us to cope more successfully with the problems that from time immemorial have perplexed religious people, and to harmonize our religious convictions with our modern knowledge of the world.

So much philosophy has done for religion in past days. Perhaps the most striking example is its contribution to early Christianity. The Gospel of Jesus and His first

[1] *Microcosmos*, Eng. trans. vol. i. p. 396.

disciples passed into the Gentile world set in the framework of Jewish Apocalyptic. But in its new environment it did not long retain this setting. Very speedily it was translated into the categories of Hellenistic religious speculation. Already in the Pauline gospel the work of translation was begun; and it was carried further by the Fourth Evangelist, Irenæus, Origen, and their successors. For the conception of the Kingdom of God there was substituted that of eternal life; for the Son of Man conception, the Kyrios and the Logos; for repentance, regeneration; for faith, the mystical union; for the Spirit's activity, the deifying action of the Word, the Sacrament, or the vision of God. The doctrines of the Greek creeds, to which the Church in practically all its branches still clings, represent an amalgamation of faith convictions with speculative ideas derived from Hellenistic philosophy.

In his monumental *History of Dogma*, Harnack, occupying the Ritschlian standpoint, sees in this whole process a secularizing of the Gospel and a decline from primitive simplicity. And he is not wholly in error. But there are two things which he fails to recognize—that the process was inevitable and that Christianity gained by it more than it lost. The primitive gospel itself had, as we have seen, its speculative setting. And how could Gentile Christians have made for themselves a home in a world-view which was not only alien to them, but, from the speculative standpoint, far inferior to their own? It may fairly be argued that Christianity could never have conquered the Hellenistic world had it not been translated into the categories of Hellenistic thought. A support was thereby provided for faith very far from insignificant. And we can add that theological problems like the origin and universality of evil and the mode of

the Divine operations received a solution which, however little it can satisfy us to-day, was better than anything Hebrew or Jewish reflection had to offer.

In the matter of fruitful ideas and viewpoints, religion's debt to philosophy in modern times is certainly not less than in the early centuries. Already we have referred to the adjustments in our theological thinking rendered necessary by the advent of the Copernican astronomy, the conception of the universality and invariableness of law, the conception of evolution and the new psychology. What but philosophical ideas and philosophical reflection have made possible the at least partial adjustments that have already been effected? From these we have learned that worth is not to be measured by physical bulk, that our belief in the value of the human soul in God's sight is not at all affected by the discovery of the insignificance of our planet among the worlds that people space. The same teacher has enabled us to recognize in unvarying law not a rival of God or a substitute for Him, but an expression of His unchanging will; to recognize also that evolution is not a cause of anything, is not responsible for anything, that it represents only the mode in which the unseen Power accomplishes His creative work—a mode not less but more marvellous than that figured by the older thought. If modern psychology has compelled us to face the fact that the mind has its mechanism as well as the body, and that our loftiest sentiments can be traced to humble enough beginnings, philosophy has come to us with the reminder that the self, if it has its mechanistic aspect, is more than mechanism, and that the origin of our sentiments or our faculties is one question, and their validity and worth quite another.

Perhaps the greatest gift which modern philosophy

has bestowed on religion is the idea of the Divine immanence in nature and in man. As will be shown in the succeeding chapter, the old conception of transcendence mitigated by miracle had become impossible. If faith was not to be subjected to an intolerable strain, another way of conceiving God's relation to the world had to be struck out. So sane a thinker as M'Giffert declares that the immanence idea meant nothing less than the saving of theism. Other illustrations of religion's debt to philosophy in the same direction might easily be added. One need only refer to the light which the idea of evolution has cast on the hoary problem of the origin and nature of moral evil.

3. There remains still another side of the debt to be noted. Philosophy has rendered no small service to religion by its analytic work, and in the salutary but rarely appreciated rôle of critic.

Always the Church has tended to treat the Christian religion as an indivisible whole, and to require in the name of faith adherence to every jot and tittle. What but philosophical reflection have we to thank for our modern conception of it as a highly complex structure, comprising elements that differ widely with respect to origin, stability, and value? Of its analytic work in the fields of epistemology and dogma we have already given some account. It has been of immense practical importance, more particularly in an age of unsettlement, that men have been able to draw a clear line of separation between what belongs to faith and what to speculation, and to distinguish between content and form, substance and time clothing.

And not less signal has been philosophy's service in the rôle of critic, drawing attention to outworn and untenable conceptions, and demanding revision and

reconstruction. That the Church should usually have resented criticism as leading to unsettlement if not to apostasy, is natural. Its interest in religion is, and ought to be, mainly of the practical kind ; and one will readily grant that correct theoretical notions are not religion's prime necessity. Many of the most saintly lives have been nourished on a daily diet of theoretical incredibilities. At the same time, the outworn cannot in the long run but prove a burden to religion. Sooner or later a religion, if it is not to suffer collapse, must cut itself loose from dead material.

Another service of the critical kind philosophy has rendered in making clear the more or less symbolical character of religious conceptions. For precisely defined concepts the great religious teachers have cared little or nothing. Their language has been that of poetry and parable. When Jesus describes God as our Father in heaven, or as the supreme Judge seated on His throne, and speaks of drinking wine with His disciples in the Kingdom of God, the pictorial element is unmistakable. But if less obvious, it is equally present in conceptions that are not in their form metaphorical. As an illustration we take the thought of God as a personal being. Personality is the highest category at our disposal, and it expresses a truth about God which is absolutely vital for ethical religion. At the same time, when we try to conceive a personal God by eliminating all in human personality which may seem to be a mark of imperfection, the attempt palpably breaks down. We are conscious of a beyond which we cannot define. God, we are compelled to realize, transcends personality as we know it. Our human categories crumble when we stretch them to cover the Infinite. In teaching us this, philosophical reflection delivers us from an offensive

dogmatic omniscience, and cultivates within us the truly religious virtues of humility and reverence. Only let it be borne in mind that to recognize the symbolical and partial character of our thoughts of God is not to deny them objective truth. This extreme view, which Sabatier approached, rests on the untenable conception of God as a transcendent being whose innermost nature is incapable of description by any terms derived from the world of our experience. Our knowledge, if partial, is adequate for the needs of religion. To return to our illustration, if human personality cannot be taken as a measure of the Divine, something real and vital the two have in common. As William James writes: "They are akin at least in this, that each has purposes for which he cares, and each can hear the other's call."

It is easy to expect too much from philosophy. Philosophy does not furnish the basis of religion, and it can never by itself generate religious belief. Religion has its basis in faith; and what awakens faith is contact with Divine reality. None the less philosophy has rendered and still renders to religion signal service. By its destructive criticism of systems that are either anti-religious or that fail to do justice to fundamental values, it does much to smooth the path for faith. Its contribution of suggestive ideas and viewpoints enables us to unify in some measure our theoretical and our religious knowledge, thereby lending to the latter a far from insignificant support. Finally, by its work of analysis and its untrammelled criticism it teaches us to discriminate between what is primary and what is secondary, and does something to free religion from the outworn, and to preserve it from dogmatism and stagnation.

But is there not something to be put down to the opposite account? The suspicion and dislike with which

philosophy has almost uniformly been regarded from the side of religion can hardly be dismissed as due wholly to prejudice. That speculative conceptions taken up into a religion are apt to entrench themselves, and to retain their place long after they have ceased to serve any useful purpose, is a matter for which philosophy cannot be justly held accountable. Rather is it due to religion's notorious conservatism. But there are two perils attaching to an intimate association which experience has shown to be real and imminent.

The first besets the values for which religion stands. While every spiritual philosophy aims at giving to our highest values a place at the centre of things, there is not one to which we can point as conserving these values without omission or abridgment. There is not one of which a Christian man can say that he finds embodied in it the fullness of his faith. Sometimes the rational and æsthetic values are emphasized at the expense of the ethical, the universe being exhibited as primarily a wonderful work of art or a harmonious system of ideas. Again a thinker may be quite sincere in his desire to maintain the reality of the distinction between good and evil, the significance of personality and of purpose, and the significance of history as the field of a real and not a sham battle, and yet fail to do so. Has he not to consider what his system will permit ? How difficult a thing it is to fit the facts of experience, and particularly the moral facts, into an articulated system without mutilating and distorting them, every student of philosophy knows. And the same danger dogs the steps of the thinker when he attempts, as he is bound to attempt, to strip religious conceptions of illegitimate anthropomorphisms and give to them precision and definiteness. We are apt to get nothing as the result of such a process but conceptions

that are lifeless and cold. Instead of the living God of religion, we are offered a bloodless abstraction—the One, the Infinite, the Whole, a teleological world principle, a unity unfolding itself in diversity, an immutable, incorruptible, self-existent substance and the like. In such abstractions religion cannot recognize its object, and it may well fear their influence. A living God in the fullness of His manifestation is of much more importance to it than a developed system or than a conceptual precision which may well turn out to be illusory.

The second peril which religion has to fear from the side of philosophy is that of being intellectualized. Religion may easily be led to take up into its structure so much speculative material as to be overweighted with it. It may, indeed, become itself a philosophy, with the result that its essential nature as a faith is obscured. Of this we have an outstanding illustration in the Brahmanism of the *Upanishads*. And Brahmanism may also stand as an illustration of the price that has to be paid ; for it has never been able to function as a religion for the mass. But we have an example nearer our own door. The largeness of Christianity's borrowing from Hellenistic speculation has already been remarked, and also that Christianity was in some ways a gainer. Here we have to call attention to the debit side of the account. The speculative development of Christian doctrine—we think particularly of the doctrine of the constitution of Christ's person—was carried to a point where doctrine ceased to be a medium of the Gospel, and Christianity was intellectualized, to the serious laming of its religious power. The cry, " Back to Jesus," has behind it the desire for a religion less overburdened with speculative material.

It is worthy of remark that in no single case—not in Platonism nor in Neo-Platonism—has a philosophy

succeeded in founding a Church. Individuals may have been able to find in it a sufficient satisfaction for their religious needs, but never a community. And the obvious reason is that in philosophy the speculative element predominates over the religious. Of this we cannot, of course, complain, for is it not the *métier* of a philosopher to speculate; but the outcome should serve as a warning.

These considerations may help us to understand and in some measure to sympathize with the Ritschlian demand for a complete divorce of religion from metaphysic. The perils of an alliance are not altogether imaginary. But, as we have seen, the shield has another side. Not to speak of the undoubted gains that have accrued to religion, the impulse of the mind to unify its knowledge is too powerful to be resisted. Even were the divorce desirable, it is not practicable. And there are cases in which one does not see how religion could maintain itself without the aid of theory. We have spoken of the collapse of the old transcendence conception of God's relation to the world. Suppose we had nothing to put in its place. Could we continue to believe in a living God besetting us without and within had we no conception of a way in which He could reach us and move us? In this case a theory is not a luxury, but a necessity.

Something, however, we must concede to Ritschl. It is a mistake for religion to commit itself without reserve to any speculative idea or system. Sooner or later a too intimate alliance will prove an embarrassment. For its own sake religion must preserve a certain independence. Further, the distinction between religion and philosophy, between faith knowledge on the one hand, and theoretical or speculative knowledge on the other, must never be lost sight of. Nor must it be forgotten that now, as of old, the just shall live not by theories, but by faith.

CHAPTER VI

THE IDEA OF THE SUPERNATURAL

NOT every fact or event awakens within us the feeling that we are in the presence of Deity. Most of what passes before our eyes makes upon us no distinct religious impression. But here and there it is otherwise. Something happens that is religiously arresting, and, awed and thrilled, we declare with Jacob of old, " Surely God is in this place ; this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Now it is just this fact of special Divine manifestations that underlies the conception of the Supernatural, providing it with its experimental basis. In its fundamental meaning the Supernatural is the religiously arresting, as opposed to facts or events that have no such quality.

Among uncivilized or semi-civilized peoples what has this arresting power is the extraordinary, the weird, the eerie, the uncanny—a fantastically shaped object, a curious animal, a meteoric stone, a forest glade, a lonely tarn, a madman, an ecstatic. In the presence of such phenomena primitive races get the religious shudder ; they know themselves confronted by some *numen*, by the supernatural.

Taking a long leap to the Hebrew prophets, we find that the extraordinary still maintains its place as a criterion of the Divine. It is in the extraordinary that the presence and working of God are specially felt and

seen. Two things have, however, to be noted. The phenomena that arrested at an earlier stage have, for the most part, passed out of sight. Where the prophets trace the manifest working of God is in inner convulsions of the soul, and in startling national deliverances or catastrophes—the crossing of the Red Sea, the destruction of Sennacherib's army, the restoration from captivity, the fall of Samaria, Jerusalem, Nineveh, and Babylon. This in itself is a momentous change. The things in which the Divine is recognized are no longer trivial, but of large human significance. And this is not all. A new criterion in addition to that of the extraordinary emerges and becomes determinative. The new criterion is the moral character and bearing of the fact or event. Not through all ecstatics or prophets does God speak, but only through those who declare His authentic word. And what gives to extraordinary national events their religious significance is the fact that they are capable of being ethically interpreted. The supernatural and the ethical are brought into a union never to be dissolved.

In the Old Testament one will look in vain for any metaphysical theory of the supernatural. God is indeed thought of in a naively transcendent way—He dwells in the high and the holy place remote from the world, and transacts with men and affairs as a sovereign with his subjects—but the world is not set over against Him as a realm that has its own principle and order with which He does not usually interfere. Everywhere His power makes itself felt and everything that happens is by His decree. What the supernatural is opposed to is, therefore, not the natural in the modern sense of the term, but the customary ways of the Divine working, and, of course, the activities of human beings.

If there is no developed theory of the supernatural in the Old Testament, one is clearly recognizable in the New. It is based on Hellenistic dualism. Between the world and God Hellenistic thought finds a deep chasm. As material, the world is the domain of transience and evil. It owes its existence not directly to God—it is unworthy of that honour—but to an intermediate principle or being, the Logos. In His essential nature God transcends the world, and is indescribable by any predicates drawn from it. This does not mean that in the world there is nothing that can be called Divine. As the work of the Divine Logos, the world exhibits rationality and beauty; and man, if on the lower side of his nature material or fleshly, is in virtue of his rational endowment akin to the Logos. While the dualism is thus in some measure qualified, in no sense is it annulled. The gulf between God and the world remains absolute. In His essential nature, we repeat, God appears as an absolutely transcendent being, indescribable by any predicates the world can supply. It was by the appropriation of this speculative world-view that the Church was able to give to the idea of the supernatural, in the general sense of the Divine, what it had never received in the Old Testament, a metaphysical background and setting.

The process by which the result was reached was a gradual one. In Paul it is already in motion. As conceived by the great apostle of the Gentiles, the supernatural or Divine is the transcendent, as opposed to all that has its home in the material or fleshly world of transience and sin. Its appearance in the natural world signifies an incursion from the beyond. When the Redeemer comes on the scene it is as a visitor from the transcendent; He accepts a mode of existence foreign

to His real nature. And the work which He does in destroying the hostile powers that hold the human soul in bondage is such as only a transcendent being could accomplish. The Divine operations to which salvation is due are conceived in the same fashion. The Holy Spirit, whose activities are the source of all the virtues of the Christian life, as well as of the extraordinary gifts, like the power to speak with tongues and work miracles, is an energy that bursts into the natural order from the realm of the transcendent. From the virtues of the unregenerate, those of the regenerate are distinguished by their supermundane origin. As the sphere of the Spirit or the Risen Christ—in the thought of the Apostle the two tend to coalesce — the Church is a transcendent or supermundane institution. Its ministers have a supermundane endowment. Whether the Sacraments are thought of as acting *ex opere operato* is a disputed point, but in any case they mediate a supermundane grace.

In the Fourth Gospel the Hellenizing of the conception of the supernatural is carried a stage further. A new and more distinctively Hellenistic rendering is given to the idea of the supernatural character of Christian knowledge. As absolutely transcendent God is inaccessible to human thought, and can be known only through the mediation of the transcendent Logos-Christ. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Also there comes into view the characteristically Hellenistic conception of the deification of our human and therefore corruptible nature through union with the incorruptible nature of the transcendent God. "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live:

and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die."

The Fourth Evangelist thinks of the divinizing union as established through knowledge. But in the subsequent development this idea is overshadowed by the idea of a union of substances. Perhaps the most outstanding contribution of the Greek Fathers—we do not here assess its permanent value—was its conception of the Divine as a transcendent, supernatural substance. As opposed to creaturely substance, which is derivative, mutable, and corruptible, Divine substance has the attributes of uncreatedness, immutability, and incorruptibility. The relation between the two is thus one of complete disparity.

In this determination of the human and the Divine, the natural and the supernatural, the Greek Fathers found the key to the solution of most of their theological problems. It solved for them the problem of Christ's divinity and of the Incarnation. It also solved the problem of redemption. For the Greek Fathers the most deadly hurt of our human nature was not sin, but mortality ; and the wonderful thing that Christ accomplished was to deify or make immortal our creaturely substance by receiving it into union with His own Divine substance. The stress which they laid on this process had the effect of pushing the Pauline conception of the morally renewing work of the Spirit into the background. The moral life of the regenerate was regarded as a product of human freedom rather than of a supernatural force. In the West, however, the Pauline conception had never been forgotten ; and by Augustine it was given a place at the very centre of religion. Of human freedom and its moral capacity Augustine will hear nothing. Inheriting a nature utterly corrupt, man is the slave of sin, and owes his salvation solely to the operations of

Divine grace—grace being conceived as a quasi-physical force which descends upon the soul from the transcendent world, to renew it unto righteousness.

In the Roman Church both of these conceptions of the supernatural—as a transcendent substance and as a transcendent force—were conserved and worked out in all their bearings. Protestant writers have been accustomed to assume that Catholicism represents, if not a complete, yet a most serious, break with the New Testament and the early Fathers. But the charge is difficult to substantiate. No doubt in the course of time much was added, especially in the region of the hierarchical and the sacramental, which can hardly be regarded as on primitive lines. But in its fundamental theological conceptions, Rome has remained remarkably faithful to the Hellenistic interpretation and setting which the Christian Gospel had already received in the early centuries; and it can justly claim whatever credit is due to those who stand philosophically exactly where men stood nineteen hundred years ago.

For the Catholic Church, as for Paul and Augustine, the new life of the believer is the product, not of human striving, though the human will is a co-operating factor, but of forces that descend upon the soul from the transcendent world. Catholic theology indeed recognizes a faith, hope, and love that are not supernatural but natural, being the native response of what is best within a man to the appeal of the truth. To these natural virtues it ascribes, however, only a minor worth. They have no power to unite the soul with God, and they are completely destitute of the merit that carries eternal life as its reward. While the new life includes moral perfection, it cannot be exhaustively described in terms of a human morality and piety. The creature, even when

carried to the highest reaches of creaturely perfection, is still on the natural plane ; nature furnishing the ends for which he strives, and the moral principles—those of the Decalogue—by which he rules his conduct. If he is to realize his vocation to Divine sonship, he must be elevated above the plane of nature, and made a partaker of the eternal life of the transcendent God, who alone is supernatural. And this is the great thing which regeneration effects. Man is in a real sense deified. In the process of deification three elements or moments are distinguished. By adoption man is raised to the dignity of a child of God : he receives a supernatural status. Further, there is the communication of a Divine life transcending natural morality and natural piety even at their best. In this life the central and crowning energy is the love of God in the Augustinian sense of the term (*caritas*), a love that includes all efficacious striving after the vision and fruition of God. Its supernatural quality appears in the fact that it apprehends and embraces God as He is in Himself. While natural love starts from itself, loving all things for its own sake, supernatural love starts from God, loving all things for His sake. Such love is similar to that with which God loves Himself as the highest good, and is beyond the attainment of the mere creature. Equally supernatural are the faith, hope, and morality of the regenerate. Faith is a supernatural thinking, a foretaste of the beatific and intuitive vision of the blessed. Wherein the peculiar excellence of the supernatural morality lies, Catholic theologians have some difficulty in telling. Usually it is established by connecting morality with love or *caritas*, the supernatural excellence of which is regarded as self-evident.

In addition to Adoption and the communication of

Divine life, the process of deification involves, according to Catholic doctrine, a communication of the Divine substance. The creature is elevated into a new and higher order of being, his very substance becoming supernatural or supermundane.

Mediating and ministering to a supernatural life, the Church of Rome claims to be itself a supernatural institution. Unlike the family, the State, and religious organizations outside itself, it was founded by the direct act of the transcendent God. It is the custodian of a supernaturally given knowledge, and through its sacraments it dispenses supernatural grace. From top to bottom it is compacted of miracle; and it claims that the power to work miracles in the narrower sense of the term still resides in it. And miracle receives a metaphysical interpretation in correspondence with that of the supernatural in general. A miraculous event is no longer regarded as simply an unusual and startling manifestation of Divine power. It is one that cannot be accounted for by the forces resident in the world, but requires for its explanation the intervention of the transcendent God.

That this whole interpretation of Divine being and action is in terms of Hellenistic speculation no one with any intimate acquaintance with the two will be disposed to dispute. Fundamental to it is the Hellenistic dualism of the transcendent God and the created world. The Divine or supernatural is identified with the supermundane; the natural to which it is opposed is the mundane or creaturely. Between the two the relation is one of almost complete disparity. While morality is in some sense common to both, it has to be remembered that with respect to His essential nature God is defined not by ethical but by metaphysical predicates—He is

uncreated, immutable, immortal—and that morality by itself does nothing to unite the human soul with its Maker. What is true of Divine being is true also of Divine action. Supernatural grace is conceived as a force that penetrates into the created world from the realm of the transcendent. Its distinctive feature is found in its supermundane character.

In the conception of faith taught by Luther there lay the germs of another way of regarding the relation between God and the world than the Hellenistic one, and of another system of doctrine than that based on Hellenistic metaphysic. According to Luther, Christian faith is one and the same with trust in the God who has manifested the riches of His mercy and grace in Jesus Christ. And what awakens and nourishes it is the revelation itself, the power of the word. True faith springs up in the soul as a response to the God who in Jesus Christ discloses to it His inmost heart. Such faith is the whole of religion subjectively considered. *Vivere in nuda fiducia misericordiæ dei*—there is nothing beyond that. To have faith is to be in full possession of God. Faith is itself the new birth, and from it all good works proceed. "It is a living, busy, active, powerful thing; it is impossible for it not to do good continually. It never asks whether good works are to be done; it has done them before there is time to ask the question, and is always doing them."

Consider what all this involves. If faith is the whole of religion on its subjective side, and if its sole and ultimate object is God as He is known to us in Jesus Christ, no place is left for an essential Divine nature that transcends ethical determinations, or for a vision of God or a substantial union with Him that transcends the ethical and personal relation. Hellenistic and

Catholic mysticism is excluded, and God is found not beyond the world, but within it. To know mercy, to know love, is to know God. Further, if what awakens faith is the Gospel itself, the Catholic notion of grace as a supermundane force becomes superfluous. In general we can say that the new conception of faith carried with it a new conception of the supernatural. It was no longer possible to identify the natural with the mundane, and the supernatural with the supermundane.

Some of the bearings of the new conception of faith the Reformers were able to see and to give effect to. Except in christology the idea of a supermundane substance and its communication was tacitly dropped. The distinction between a natural and a supernatural morality and piety was for the most part obliterated. Miracles were limited to Bible times. The Church and the clergy were stripped of their miraculous powers, and assigned the apparently humbler vocation of being the ministers of faith. Less generally the Sacraments ceased to be regarded as miraculous in their action. In the Augsburg Confession we are told that they were ordained "not only as marks of profession among men, but still more as signs and testimonies of the will of God towards us, set forth for the purpose of exciting faith in such as use them."

While the Reformers made a beginning in the task of reconstructing theology from the standpoint of evangelical faith, it was nothing more than a beginning, and a timid one. The Greek creeds were taken over unrevised. At least in some sections of the Protestant Church a Hellenistic leaven was retained in the conception of the Sacraments. The inspiration of the Bible was interpreted in the sense of a miraculous control in the interests of inerrancy. The notion of supernatural grace in the

traditional sense of the term was retained. What awakens faith is the word; yes, but in order to be effective the word must be accompanied by the Spirit, the Spirit being conceived in the old way, as a quasi-physical force hailing from the transcendent. The traditional identification of the supernatural or Divine with the supermundane and miraculous, Protestant theology did not think of challenging.

Not till towards the close of the eighteenth century did the challenge come. It did not come until the new scientific conception of the world, the building up of which has been the outstanding intellectual achievement of the modern era, had brought religion to such a pass, at least for those who could not reject that conception, that a rethinking of the relation between God and the world became, if religion was to survive, a thing imperative.

The transcendence idea is religiously tolerable only so long as the points at which God is believed to break into the world-order are fairly numerous. In order to work it requires a large draft on the bank of the miraculous. On this bank the Roman Church drew to an unlimited extent, and Protestant drafts, if more modest, were still considerable. How modern science has blocked one by one the assumed avenues of intercourse between the phenomenal and the transcendent is a familiar story, and need not be recounted at length. In all departments of existence the reign of unvarying law has been established, and the evolutionary process explained by the interaction of resident forces. If the gap between the inorganic and the organic and that between life and mind still remain unbridged, no scientist to-day thinks of invoking the hypothesis of an incursion of creative energy from outside the system which we call

nature. The continuity of the evolutionary process has become axiomatic.

Still more serious for the traditional conception of the supernatural are the conclusions of modern psychology. Time was when man's inner life, more especially on its emotional and volitional side, seemed to defy reduction to any such ordered sequence of events as that exhibited by the external world. If idea followed idea according to the laws of association, what law determined the fluctuations of mood and feeling? In the case of a religious experience like conversion with its convulsions and revolutionary changes, when not seldom a man seemed to be carried to a predestined goal in spite of himself, the entrance of a compelling force from the region of the transcendent seemed a natural and credible explanation. The supernatural, driven from the outer world, found a last refuge in the mystery of the inner. But here, too, scientific investigation has penetrated, establishing connectedness and order. To-day we speak of the psychology of religion; and the term indicates the new scientific attitude towards religious experience. From the standpoint of the psychologist, every psychical event is to be explained by its phenomenal antecedents; of an invasion from the transcendent the psychologist takes and can take no account. When he comes to a gap, he does not invoke the supernatural, but acknowledges his ignorance and resumes his investigations. And admittedly many of the gaps have been filled up. The hypothesis that a large section of the mind is beneath the threshold of consciousness, and that in this subliminal region inherited tendencies and past experiences are elaborated and organized into results that affect the conscious life, has thrown a flood of light on much that was once completely inexplicable. It is

true that the hypothesis has been exploited by men like Myers in the interests of a new and highly questionable supernaturalism, and that William James threw out the suggestion that, if there is such a thing as Divine intervention, it is in the region of the subliminal that it is to be looked for; but neither Spiritualism nor the suggestion of James can be taken seriously. There is nothing to indicate that the subconscious is specially Divine, or that it contains anything that has not been put there by heredity and past experience. The idea of a breach of causal continuity and an invasion from a transcendent world is just as little acceptable to modern psychology as to modern physical science.

What all this means is that the presumed avenues of intercourse between a transcendent God and a created world have been effectively blocked. For any action of the transcendent on the phenomenal there is absolutely no evidence. The realities and forces of which we have any knowledge are without exception mundane. The notions of supernatural grace, in the traditional sense of the term, and of the communication of a supernatural substance have become for those who accept the modern scientific conception of things impossible.

What of miracle in the narrower sense of the word? Although interpreted in the past in terms of the transcendence metaphysic, it is not so bound up with that metaphysic as to be involved in its collapse; one may quite well think of an immanent God as occasionally and for sufficient reasons acting in a way that contradicts the general mode of His operations. Miracle may therefore justly claim to receive independent consideration.

As we have seen in the preceding chapter, the idea is for the scientist inadmissible. The scientist assumes,

and must assume, the constancy of what we call the natural order. And his assumption, though incapable of absolute demonstration, has behind it an immense mass of experience. What amount of evidence has the defender of miracle, in the traditional sense of an interruption of natural law, to place in the opposite scale? For the Protestant, at least, the question narrows itself down to the miracles of the Bible and the evidence that can be produced for them. And it must be said frankly, that in no single case have we the evidence of an eye-witness who sets down in unambiguous language what he witnessed. Paul refers to the power to work miracles as a not uncommon spiritual gift, but what he has in view is clearly what we should describe as faith healing. Not once does he cite the miracles of the Gospel narrative. His belief in Jesus' resurrection he bases, so far as sense-experience is concerned, on a vision which he shared with the first disciples and with some five hundred other brethren: "Last of all he appeared to me also"; "Have not I seen Christ?" Since we get no details, we are in no position to assert that the vision was outside the possibility of psychological explanation. Of the empty grave, the angel visitants, the human intercourse of the risen Christ with His disciples culminating in the partaking of a meal with them, the bodily ascension from the Mount of Olives, we hear from Paul not one word.

Second- or third-hand testimony is not, of course, without value, especially when, as in the case of the Gospel narratives, the good faith of the narrators is beyond question. But two things have to be borne in mind. The first is that not a little depends on the inherent credibility or incredibility of the facts narrated. The authority of Livy does not cover his lists of prodigies when the prodigies contradict the mass of our human

experience. Often it is argued that though miracles are not of general occurrence, in the case of those reported in the sacred history the presumption is not against them, but in their favour. Should we not expect that in His special revelation God should work in a special way?—above all, should we not expect that the Son of God should exhibit His power as the Lord of nature? But in truth faith, though certain of God, has no *a priori* knowledge of the way in which God will work. For our knowledge we are thrown back on experience, and often enough our assumptions have to be corrected in the light of experience. In the case of the principle of the uniformity of nature the mass of experience behind it is so immense that practically no amount of historical testimony, which even at its best is fallible, would avail to establish exceptions. In the words of Hume: "No testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless it be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavours to establish. When any one tells me that he saw a dead man restored to life, I immediately consider with myself whether it be more probable that this person should either deceive or be deceived, or that the fact which he relates should really have happened." Often denounced, this argument has never been answered. As M'Giffert points out, Hume does not deny the possibility of establishing by testimony an occurrence that is inexplicable in the light of present knowledge, but only the impossibility of establishing an occurrence which, as a violation of a known law, can be used as a proof of the direct intervention of Deity.[1] It is God Himself, one can say, by the impact of facts, who has taught us to receive stories of miracle with scepticism.

[1] *Protestant Thought before Kant*, p. 219.

The second thing we have to bear in mind in connection with the Bible testimonies to the miraculous is that the early identification of the Divine with the extraordinary has notoriously led in every religion to a lavish creation of marvels. Some of the miracles of the Old Testament—the dividing of the Red Sea, for example, and the standing still of the sun—we can see taking shape before our eyes. And in the New Testament there are some which critics, who have no objection to the miraculous in itself, feel compelled to reject as unhistorical. The withering of the fig tree, the turning of water into wine, the coming forth of saints from their tombs on the day of Christ's resurrection, are too evidently a product of the religious phantasy. This consideration goes to confirm what has already been said.

Is there any genuine religious interest involved in the idea of the miraculous? As proofs of the Messiahship of Jesus or of the truth of Bible teaching, miracles have long ceased to have any effectiveness. When they are appealed to, it is almost always as a demonstration that the laws and forces of nature are not the ultimate reality with which we have to reckon, that these are but instruments in the hand of a living God who uses them in a sovereign way. We are not shut up in an iron network of necessity, through which no cry can ascend and no hand reach down to help us. Such a motive has a universal appeal. Who has not at some time craved for just such a demonstration? There are times when Moses and the prophets, or even Jesus Himself, do not seem to be enough. In the darker days of the war what should we not have given for some unambiguous sign from Heaven, were it only an Angel of Mons, that God was fighting on the side of the right? But a sign in the sense of a miracle is just what we do not get. However

it was in the past, our faith to-day has to support itself without any such adventitious aid. Does it not belong to the nature of religion that faith must bear the whole burden? We recall the striking words of Jesus, "If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

In order to escape the difficult idea of an infringement of law, not a few apologists, following Leibniz and Butler, have proposed to interpret miracle as the overriding of a lower law by a higher and more comprehensive one of which in the present state of our knowledge we can give no account. This interpretation is not without an element of truth. Any fact or law that can be established exhibiting or suggesting the mastery of mind over matter, the spiritual over the natural, will be an unquestionable help to our faith. But as a device for saving the miracles of the Bible—and that is the main purpose for which it is advanced—the interpretation is of more than doubtful utility. A certain class of New Testament miracles may indeed be brought under it. Jesus' works of mental and bodily healing are in line with what we know of the power of a great personality to influence the mind of another, and through the mind to act upon the body. But what shall we say about walking upon the water by the power of faith? For a law of this description there is absolutely no evidence except what the Gospel stories supply; and the evidence for these stories is such as we have seen. Is there any scientist who would dream of formulating on the basis of that evidence a law of nature?

We must now return to the history of the transcendence idea. The rationalistic thinkers of the eighteenth century accepted without reserve the view of the world taught by modern science. Miracle, together with the

supernatural in its more general sense, were discarded. But Rationalism had no thought of surrendering the idea of God; and what is more, it had no thought of breaking with the traditional conception of God as a transcendent Being whose life was independent of and remote from that of the world. It retained the conception of a transcendent God while accepting the fact that every avenue of intercourse between such a God and the world of His creation had been effectively and finally blocked. What kind of a religion was possible under these conditions? The answer was—Deism.

The God of Deism is an absentee God. No place is found for Him except at the beginning of things and at their end. He is The Great First Cause who called the world into being, constituting it in such marvellous fashion that, like a clock that has been wound up, it can function indefinitely without external interference and control; and He is also the just and almighty Judge before whose awful eye we must go in death. That is all. We can think of God as active in the far-distant past, and as a reality to be reckoned with when our earthly days are over; but nowhere can we meet with Him or feel the touch of His hand in the living present. For Kant, who never succeeded in emancipating himself from Rationalism, God was no more than a postulate. While our practical reason requires us to assume His existence, it is a fanatical dream to imagine that we can have any immediate experience of Him. That on such terms a religion of any permanent vitality was impossible requires no demonstration.

The reaction from Rationalism and Deism, in so far as it was religious, assumed two forms. The Church in general took the conservative path, reaffirming the

old transcendence conception and the old supernaturalism in all its branches. In the Wesleyan revival, the Catholic revival, the evangelical movement in Scotland, and the evangelical and neo-Catholic movements in the Church of England, the fundamental ideas were one and all derived from the theology of transcendence and supernaturalism.

But among those who found Deism intolerable, there were not a few for whom the conservative path had been finally closed. Taking seriously the modern conception of a law-ruled universe in which miracles do not happen, and unable to believe in an absentee God, they found refuge in the thought of God as the life and soul of the only world of which we have any knowledge. For the idea of the Divine transcendence they substituted that of the Divine immanence.

The earliest exponents of the immanence idea were the Romantic poets and the writers who stood under their influence — Rousseau, Goethe, Wordsworth, Shelley, Carlyle, Emerson. What kind of a God, asks Goethe, were one who made the world spin round His finger? It befits God to move the world from within, cherishing nature in Himself, and Himself in nature:

> "Ihm ziemts die Welt im Innern zu bewegen,
> Natur in Sich, Sich in Natur zu hegen."

Wordsworth's "Lines written at Tintern Abbey" are too familiar to require quotation. In the immanence idea Carlyle found a refuge from the nightmare of materialism—its world a vast, solitary Golgotha and mill of death, into which the living are banished companionless—and a substitute for his early Presbyterian faith, grown incredible to him. The idea restored to the world its glory and Divinity. "This fair universe," he writes in *Sartor Resartus*, "were it in the meanest

province thereof, is in very deed the star-domed city of God; through every star, through every grass blade, and most through every human soul, the glory of a present God still beams." "The universe is not dead and demoniac, a charnel-house with spectres, but Godlike and my Father's." What the poets possessed as an intuition, the philosophers—Fichte, Schelling, Hegel—established on a reasoned basis—not everywhere secure—and worked out into a system. By Schleiermacher, and later by Schweitzer, the new idea was carried into theology. So far it has found acceptance only among the cultured classes; the mass of Christian people, for reasons not hard to understand, continue to think of God in terms of transcendence and miracle.

For the present writer, as for many others who are unable, when it comes to religion, to lapse into Mediævalism, an immanent God is the only God it is possible to believe in. God is known as the infinite and eternal Power who works at the heart of things, manifesting Himself in nature and in human life and history. As we have already expressed it, He is the Power on whom we and all things hang, interpreted in terms of the highest we know. Of a God outside the world, independent of it, and in His essential being indescribable by any predicates derived from it, we know and can know nothing. There is no logic that can lead us up to the existence of such a God. The traditional cosmological argument attempts the feat. The backward chain of causes, so the reasoning goes, conducts us, if we reject the impossible notion of an infinite regress, to a self-existent First Cause. Apart from the fact that this argument does not at all represent the religious process through which men come to believe in God, no logical cogency can be conceded to it. There is no more difficulty in

thinking of the world as self-existent than in thinking of a world-creator as such. The category of cause and effect, while valid within the interconnected system of things, loses its meaning when we attempt to employ it to account for the system as a whole.

Is it too much to claim for the immanence idea that it has given to our thought of God a new reality? God is not remote, but around and within us, "closer to us than breathing, nearer than hands or feet." The attribute of omnipresence, so grandly sung in the 139th Psalm, receives a fresh meaning:

> "Thou hast beset me behind and before,
> And laid thine hand upon me.
> Whither shall I go from thy spirit?
> Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
> If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:
> If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there.
> If I take the wings of the morning,
> And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
> Even there shall thy hand lead me,
> And thy right hand shall hold me."

How the supernatural is conceived when linked with the idea of a transcendent God, we have already seen. Its criterion is found in causal discontinuity. In the light of the idea of the Divine immanence it will obviously require re-interpretation. What is to be the new definition?

There are not wanting writers who declare that the immanence doctrine has rendered any kind of distinction between the natural and the supernatural meaningless and untenable. As the home of Deity and the theatre of its working, the natural in the sense of the mundane is Divine, and there is no other Divine. Secondary causes are, it is asserted, swept away; and we are left with God as the one efficient cause, at least,

outside free finite intelligences. The natural is supernatural and the supernatural natural, since all is of God.

But such a position brings us into conflict alike with our moral and with our religious consciousness. We seem to be landed in the crude pantheism which represents every portion of reality as equally Divine. Moral distinctions are thus subverted; their significance disappears when they are viewed from the standpoint of the whole. And to turn to the religious aspect of the matter, it is surely an undeniable fact of religious experience that not everything that meets us awakens within us the impression that we are in the presence of God. When a man falls from a roof, it is not religiously helpful to be told that there are no secondary causes, and that it is God, under the form of gravitation, who has shattered his body. Certainly a mean or dastardly action does not suggest the Divine, unless in the sense that it may bring into our mind the sense of a sacred Power that condemns it and reacts against it. An unguarded pantheism may not be religiously offensive, at least not obviously so, so long as religious feeling is of the æsthetic kind to which the poets have usually limited themselves. But it is otherwise when we have to do with ethical piety. With that anything like a thoroughgoing pantheism is absolutely irreconcilable.

The idea of the supernatural, as rooted in the nature of religion, is not to be discarded but re-defined. And the new definition must be in terms not of causality, but of value. We go back to the distinction already drawn between values that are intrinsic and those that are merely instrumental.[1] It is in the domain of the intrinsic values that the supernatural must be sought. In some sense life is supernatural as contrasted with the

[1] P. 70.

physical mechanism which lends it support. The one belongs to a higher order of being than the other. This, however, carries us but a little way. The supernatural of religion is indeed life, but life on a particular plane. In man there is a life which, as shared with the animals, can be described as on the plane of mere nature. Under it fall those instinctive impulses and emotions—hunger, sex-feeling, parental affection, the gregarious instinct, pugnacity, curiosity, play, etc.—which man has brought up with him from beneath. Out of this life of nature there has developed in the course of the millenniums—in a way which, despite all investigations, is for the most part wrapped in mystery—what we call the life of the spirit, with its centre in truth, beauty, and goodness. Higher than the life of the spirit there is nothing. It is supreme in the realm of values. Beyond it thought cannot reach, though we can think of it as existing in fuller perfection. The mystical assumption of a something beyond, an essentially Divine, is a mere figment of the imagination. This life of the spirit is the true supernatural, as opposed not only to the dead mechanism which it uses as an instrument, but also to the life lived on the plane of nature. It is the life of God within the soul. Nay, to meet with it within or without is to meet with God Himself. There is no other intelligible sense in which we can meet with God and enter into fellowship with Him. Where love, joy, peace, kindness, generosity, the spirit of service and sacrifice are, there God is. To have a feeling for these realities and an experience of them is to have an experience of God and of what He can be to the soul.

And it is their impact upon us that arouses the sense of sin or alienation from God. There can be no sense of sin when there is no consciousness of the good and its

claim. What but the presence of the higher condemns the lower, branding a deliberate yielding to its promptings as guilt? That a man is dead in sin means that the good passes before him and leaves him unaffected. And it is the same power—the power of the good, the power of God—that regenerates us and grounds within us the assurance of forgiveness. To know ourselves forgiven is to know that there is a love which, while condemning our sin, refuses to give us up.

The ethical is not, of course, the only manifestation of the supernatural. We have to take account of the other two ideal values—the rational and the beautiful. As the medium of these values we can speak of the sub-human world as also shot through with the supernatural. There is mechanism, and for those who have eyes to see and hearts to feel, something more. A spirit, a life, that expresses itself in wisdom and beauty, meets us and touches us.

Following the Catholic tradition, although in a way of his own, Baron Von Hügel draws the line between the natural and the (ethical) supernatural higher up than we have done. To the domain of the natural he relegates what we may call average morality and piety—clean living, honest dealing, taxpaying, a fair amount of courage in war, with a due sense of God in the background. So much, he says, is a strict necessity and ultimate duty for all. As contrasted with this average goodness, the supernatural is the goodness that is heroic. Here average justice and fairness are transfigured into genial generosity and overflowing self-devotion, and we get the goodness of Stephen's self-oblivious prayer for his enemies, of the beatitudes and of Jesus. Such goodness no state, no guild, can require. It is in this contrast, not between sin and virtue, but between nature

and supernature, that Von Hügel seeks a solid starting-point for the recovery of religion.[1]

The difference between average and heroic goodness is, of course, very real, and one which Jesus Himself strongly emphasized. "If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for even sinners love those that love them. And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? for even sinners do the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? even sinners lend to sinners, to receive again as much. But love your enemies and do them good and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the sons of the Most High: for He is kind towards the unthankful and evil." Average goodness is too often a matter of prudence, convention, and habit, with but few roots in an independent moral and religious life. Always it is less conspicuously distinct from the life that is on the level of mere nature. Rarely indeed does it make upon us the impression that we are in the presence of the supernatural and Divine, or inspire us to make the good our quest. It is not, as we have seen, the average man who is the medium of Divine revelation. Thus far we can go with Von Hügel. But it is impossible to follow him in establishing between average and heroic goodness a difference in principle and kind. There are not two kinds of goodness, but only one, however great the distance between its humbler and its grander manifestations. A goodness that has no moral root, but is a matter of convention or prudence, is, properly speaking, not goodness at all. On the other hand, the distinction we have drawn between the life which man inherits from nature and the life of the spirit which is developed on this basis

[1] *Essays and Addresses*, p. 280.

seems clear and tenable, however difficult we may find it to decide in concrete cases where the one ends and the other begins.

The account we have given of the supernatural, so far as the religious content of the idea is concerned, differs but little from the traditional one. Always Church theology has stressed the ethical quality of Divine being and Divine working. In its conception of miracle it has always included the idea that a miracle must serve some worthy end. The difference lies in the new speculative setting which the supernatural has received We have detached it from the philosophy of transcendence and re-defined it in accordance with a philosophy of immanence. From the immanence standpoint, the criterion of the supernatural is not causal discontinuity, but value. The supernatural is not a causal, but a value concept.

Is there any place in this way of looking at things for the time-honoured idea of miracle? As we have said, miracle is a particular case of the supernatural; it must, therefore, with the latter be treated as fundamentally a value concept. What has always been regarded as distinguishing it from the supernatural in general is the character of the marvellous or the extraordinary that attaches to it. Stripping it of its traditional speculative setting and taking it in its purely religious meaning, we can say that a miracle is any event in which there is exhibited in a startling and arresting way the working of Almighty God in judgment or in mercy. One may claim that this was what it meant in Bible times; for of an independent world-order of which it was an infringement, there was then no conception. In this sense the destruction of Sennacherib's army before Jerusalem and the restoration from exile

were authentic miracles. "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like unto them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing." Jesus' whole life was a miracle. The conversion of Paul was a miracle. And miracles are not to be arbitrarily limited to the days of old God is still a God who doeth wonders.

As logical proofs of the truth of Bible teaching or of the divinity of Jesus or of Jesus' or God's lordship over the world, miracles have had their day. But there is something in the religious sentiment to which they make a perennial appeal. Wonder and deep reverence before the marvellous, the mysterious, the unfathomable, are never far away from a piety that has any vitality. Of the ritual of the Roman Church with its constant suggestion of the miraculous we can say that it plays upon these elemental emotions in a way that is unsurpassed. The worshipper is made to feel that mysterious, superhuman powers are stirring. Those unable to believe in the miracle of the Mass may comfort themselves with the reflection, that in the domain of undeniable reality there are miracles infinitely more impressive and infinitely richer in spiritual meaning.

Comparing the old conception of the supernatural with the new, one advantage the former has which, in the eyes of many, will seem to put upon it the stamp of truth. It makes the working of God palpable, as it were, to common sense. This working is exhibited as sharply marked off and isolated from all workings that have their spring in the created and human. One can identify it in the created and human environment into which it has forced its way as one identifies a vein of gold intruding through baser strata. God is pictured as one individual among others. Defined in terms of immanence and

value, the supernatural loses this character of particularity and isolation. It is not separated from, but is within, the natural and human. The upward motions within my soul are my motions and also the motions of the Holy Spirit, as Paul in some fashion recognized when he bade his converts work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, knowing that it was God who was working in them. Their Divine character reveals itself not to sense or logic, but only to our feeling for values.

It may well be asked, Why change from a conception so precise and definite to one apparently so indefinite? Why perplex the minds of simple people? The answer is, that it is not mere perversity, but the exigency of facts that has dictated the change. Where we have to trace the hand of God is not in a world that is the creation of the religious imagination, but in the real world in which there is so much that is perplexing and baffling. The impact of facts has, as we have shown, rendered the old conception untenable.

At the same time, the new conception requires to be carefully guarded if the idea of a living God is not to slip from us. The chief peril attaching to it is that God be resolved into a quality, that He be thought of not as a subject, but only as a predicate. He is courage, generosity, aspiration, austere love, the sum of what is best in mankind; or again, He is the rational principle in finite intelligences; or still again, the law and unity that make the world a cosmos. But something more than this a living religion demands in its God.

A living religion requires that we think of God as Himself a subject, an independent centre of thought, feeling, and will. In other words, it requires that we think of Him as a personal being.

Personal existence is the highest form of reality of which we have any knowledge or even presentiment. Among the most fundamental of our value-judgments, and one which we all consciously or unconsciously make, is that in which we distinguish ourselves not only from mere things, but also from the animal world, as standing on the higher level of personal being. Only of persons can we say that they have a feeling for the ideal values, and that they can be their home and their creator. The attempt to transcend the category of personality has always ended and always must end in a falling below it. To conceive God as impersonal reason, or impersonal moral law, or an impersonal spirit of goodness, or an *élan vital*, is not to set Him above, but beneath, the level of the human.

And there is this second consideration. What gives to the universe its meaning is the fact of values. To say that the universe has a meaning is to say that it is the medium and instrument of that which possesses intrinsic worth. And, as we have found, values are relative to a thinking, feeling, willing subject, and apart from such a subject can have no sort of existence whatever. If therefore truth, beauty, and goodness are to be as real for the universe as for us, if they are to have a home in eternity and belong to the innermost structure of being, we must affirm that the heart and ground of things is personal. The personality of God is bound up with the cosmic place and right of values, and is thus a fundamental affirmation of religious faith.

In interpreting the supernatural or Divine in terms of immanence and value, there is a second peril that has to be avoided. There are philosophies of immanence that treat humanity and Deity as practically co-extensive. In humanity, we are told, the Absolute attains to self-

consciousness, or, according to another rendering, there is no other God than the spirit of truth and goodness active in human life. But to regard the manifestation of God in man as exhaustive is surely fatuous. Always God is both in and beyond the given fact or event. He is the spiritual power at work in the world as known to us, and more. The world is no closed system with a definite sum of potencies ; it is inexhaustible, bottomless. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven ; what canst thou do? Deeper than Sheol ; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea."

In this fact of the unsearchableness of God lies the kernel of truth in the transcendence doctrine. God is not transcendent in the Hellenistic or in the Kantian sense that there are two separate worlds, a created and an uncreated, a world of phenomena and a world of things in themselves, and that God belongs to the second The Infinite is not apart from, but in the finite ; the Eternal is not apart from, but in the temporal ; the Supernatural is not apart from, but in the natural. But transcendent God is in this sense, that behind all that we know of Him there is an illimitable unknown. The depths of being are unfathomed and unfathomable.

How to think all this together and achieve something like a connected and consistent system ! On all hands intractable problems present themselves, some of which we have already indicated. How can God be a personal being and at the same time the eternal life and light within every human soul? How are personality and omnipresence compatible with one another? Every human analogy that has been offered, that of soul and body, that of the cathedral which is something more

than the aggregate of the stones that enter into its structure, or still again, that of the so-called crowd mind as distinguished from the aggregate of individual minds, hopelessly breaks down. Again, if man is embraced in the Divine, if in God he lives and moves and has his being, how conserve that measure of independence which his sense of freedom and responsibility demands? In what sense can we speak of the life of nature as part of the Divine life? How are the Divine completeness and perfection to be reconciled with the reality of our time existence, with its clamant miseries and wrongs, its struggles, failures, and achievements? Speculative systems there are, in which the attempt is made to find for such problems some sort of solution. But the number of those holding by the Christian faith who would care to commit themselves without large reservations to any extant philosophy is few indeed. Religion is not, indeed, indifferent to the speculative enterprise. No light thrown on the spiritual structure of things but is a help to it. At the same time, its life does not hang on speculative solutions. Insoluble, or at least unsolved, problems religion has always had on its hands. If it has been able to maintain itself under these conditions, it is because it has its own indefeasible ground of certainty.

CHAPTER VII

THE STRUCTURE OF DOGMA

THE term dogma, as distinguished from doctrine, has an ecclesiastical reference. It signifies a doctrine that has been defined and promulgated by the Church as an article or law of faith. Since, however, what concerns us here is not ecclesiastical status but inner structure, we shall use the two terms interchangeably.

A second explanation is necessary. As currently employed, the term doctrine is wide enough to cover every statement of religious truth from the simplest to the most complex, the fatherhood of God equally with the trinitarian formula. It is not, however, in this wide sense that we take it here. More than once we have called attention to the distinction between the immediate affirmations of faith, which form the ultimate elements of religious knowledge, and the much more complex statements contained in the Creeds. In employing the term doctrine, it is the latter and not the former we have in view. The typical doctrines are the Incarnation, the Atonement, and the Trinity.

According to the traditional view, Christian doctrine is not a product of the human mind, but was given by supernatural revelation. Having such an origin, it is to be regarded as an ultimate datum of the Christian religion and absolutely authoritative. To demonstrate

its rationality is indeed a legitimate enterprise; only our acceptance of it is not to be made conditional on the demonstration. Its right is a higher one than human reason can furnish.

Even in the Church of Rome it is not, however, asserted that, as found in the Creeds, doctrine is a literal transcript of the original revelation committed to the Apostles. A certain development is recognized, mainly of the logical kind. The later, defined doctrines, it is held, are contained in the earlier as the conclusion of a syllogism is contained in the premises. Some slight measure of organic development is also conceded; although Cardinal Newman's very modest suggestions in this direction did not find favour at Rome. From Wilhelm and Seannel's *Manual of Catholic Theology* we take the following illustration. Scripture, while teaching that there is only one God, refers to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and speaks of Jesus Christ in such terms that He must be both God and man. What we have in the later Creeds is an elaboration and definition of these truths with the help of appropriate elements derived from Greek thought, and under the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit.

How slender a contribution this is to a genetic understanding of dogma one does not need to say. Nor has that of Protestant orthodoxy been any more considerable. To Ferdinand Christian Baur belongs the credit of having placed the study of dogma on a scientific basis. The results which Baur himself reached were, however, too much determined by the Hegelian dialectic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis to have any considerable permanent value. It is from Harnack's monumental History that our modern understanding of dogma really dates. Harnack's formula that dogma—the reference

is to that of the Greek Church—is a work of the Greek spirit on the soil of the Gospel is familiar to every student of the subject. What Harnack means is that into its structure there enter two constituents, one derived from Christian experience, the other from the speculative thought of the time ; and that it is the first that provides the basis. Accepting this account as true, we shall be guided by it in the present discussion. In so brief a study we cannot, of course, survey the whole dogmatic field, and our illustrations will be taken exclusively from what has always been regarded as the central dogma of Christianity, that, namely, of the person of Christ. Even in this limited field we must be content to note the salient points.

Had the followers of Jesus not recognized in His personality, career, and achievement features that lifted Him above even the greatest of the inspired teachers of the past, no question of a christology would ever have arisen. It would have been enough to assign Him a place in the glorious company of the Prophets. And if christology has still a right, as we believe it has, it is for the reason that, after nineteen centuries have set Jesus in an immensely larger horizon, we can continue to think of Him as a religious figure unique in the history of the race. In what does this uniqueness consist ? What are the facts about Jesus that have moved the Christian Church to set Him in a place by Himself ? Manifestly the question is one as to the basis of christology.

Already we have committed ourselves to the view that the doctrine of Jesus' person, like every other doctrine, has its basis in the experience of men and women whose hearts and lives Jesus has in some way touched. It has to be explained, however, that what we mean is the *permanent* basis. In view of the history

of christological thought, it has to be recognized that considerations that can hardly be brought under the head of experience have in wide circles been treated as equally fundamental. This will at once appear if we turn for a moment to the Gospel narratives, which were written with the express purpose of exhibiting the grounds on which the Church claimed for its founder pre-eminence over every name that is named.

That the Gospels one and all regard the moral impression produced by Jesus on susceptible minds brought into contact with Him as part of the evidence for His Messiahship, is not for a moment to be doubted. It is for this very reason that they tell the story of Zaccheus, of the Centurion, of the woman in Simon's house, of the woman of Samaria; and that they record the astonishment of the people at the authoritative note in Jesus' teaching. Jesus, they will show, could create an impression of unique moral greatness and change the course of human lives. At the same time the fact cannot be ignored that in the Gospels equal, and indeed superior, importance is attached to the evidence from prophecy, from miracle, and from Jesus' self-witness. Matthew in particular is at pains to develop the first of these lines of evidence. The advent of a Messiah was foretold in the Old Testament and His career described in its minutest details. He would spring from the house of David, be born of a virgin and in the town of Bethlehem; He would sojourn in Egypt and have His home in Nazareth; He would make a royal entrance into Jerusalem riding upon an ass; He would suffer many things, be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver, and finally be put to death; on the third day He would rise from the dead. That these and other predictions contained in an inspired book received in Jesus a literal fulfilment is advanced

as a decisive proof that Jesus was indeed the Messiah promised by God.

All the Gospels unite in stressing the proof from miracle. Jesus' mighty works are treated, not indeed exclusively, yet predominantly, as signs designed to lead men to a belief in Him as the Christ, the Son of God. They are manifestations of a superhuman power and glory. Everywhere in the New Testament supreme importance is attached to the Resurrection as the crowning sign.

How much evidential value the Gospels attach to Jesus' own declarations regarding His person it is difficult to say. Certainly they do not appeal to them as they do to prophecy and miracle. If the Fourth Evangelist makes christology the central theme of Jesus' teaching throughout His ministry, it is much less for evidential reasons than because for him christology and the Gospel are one and the same.

With certain differences and in a more scientific form, the line of argument pursued in the Gospels is reproduced by very many of our modern theologians. While the proof from prophecy, in its old form, at least, is generally abandoned as irreconcilable with our modern reading of the Old Testament, miracle and Jesus' self-witness are singled out as the basal christological facts. Jesus was born of a virgin, thus entering the world in a miraculous way. He was without sin; and His sinlessness, viewed in the light of the universal sinfulness of the race, involves a miracle. He had a superhuman consciousness of God, one differing, not merely in fullness and intimacy, but in kind from that possible to men. He showed Himself invested with miraculous power over the forces of nature. Finally, there came the stupendous miracle of the Resurrection. These facts set the problem of Jesus' person. And the one tenable solution of the

problem is that He was more than a man; that He was in a real sense God. This conclusion Jesus' self-witness confirms, and makes more precise; for He Himself must be regarded as the ultimate source of our knowledge of His rank and dignity. If He did not describe Himself in the language of the Creeds, He used words that are capable of no other interpretation than that which the Creeds give. He required of men an allegiance due only to God, exercised the prerogative of God in forgiving sin and altering the Mosaic law, and announced Himself as the sole source of our knowledge of the Father and as mankind's final Judge.

To this christological method there are many objections. The facts on which it builds are precisely those the historicity of which are most open to question. Of miracle in general we have already spoken, and need only recall the conclusion reached, that in no case is it possible to prove that an event involves an interruption of causal continuity and an invasion from the transcendent world. With respect to the witness of Jesus regarding Himself recorded in the Gospels, every student knows the extreme difficulty of deciding how much is authentic and how much must be treated as the theology of the Church put into Jesus' mouth. Moreover, it has to be remembered that all His thoughts about His person stood in relation to the Messianic idea. To relate them without more ado to the idea of Deity is quite illegitimate. Finally, what would our confession of faith be worth if it were the product of a purely intellectual argument in which Jesus is treated as a problem, or represented nothing more than deference to authority? If we can trust Mark, the first confession, that of Peter, was offered not as an assent to an authoritative declaration, but as the outcome of Peter's own perception and experience.

We are thus left with religious perception and experience as the only stable basis on which a doctrine of Christ's person can be constructed. To some extent at least, the christology of the Church has such a basis; and it is this fact more than any other that has enabled it to survive when so much has perished and to retain a measure of vitality. It must, however, be added that its experimental basis is remote rather than immediate, the method being followed of building the doctrine of Christ's person on a doctrine of His work. In the Nicene and Chalcedon christology the true humanity and Deity of Christ are established as an inference from the conception of His work as a divinizing of our mortal nature. Anselm, in his *Cur deus homo*, follows the same path, but with a different conception of Christ's work. Christ's great achievement, Anselm teaches, was to render to God a satisfaction for man's sin. But what must Christ have been to be capable of such an achievement? He must have been at once God and man. Had He not been man, His satisfaction could not have been accepted as for man; had He not been God, it would have possessed no worth sufficient to outweigh human sin. This method found a modern exponent in the late Principal Denney. "The doctrine of the Atonement," Denney writes, "is the proper evangelical foundation for a doctrine of the person of Christ. Christ is the person who can do this for us. This is the deepest and most decisive thing we can know about Him, and in answering the question it prompts we are starting from a basis in experience. . . . It is the doctrine of the Atonement which secures for Christ His place in the Gospel, and makes it inevitable that we should have a doctrine of His person." [1]

[1] *The Death of Christ*, p. 317.

Were Denney right in his assertion that to build on the doctrine of the Atonement is to build on experience, we at least should have no fault to find with his method. But he is not right. All that experience gives is that in contact with Christ a new sense of God's forgiving grace is created within us. That the death of Christ in some way made it possible for God to forgive sin is not a matter of direct experience, but only a speculative theory with an experimental basis. Now it is true that the erection of one doctrine or theory on the top of another is no uncommon thing either in theology or in philosophy. There are two-storey doctrines, three-storey, even four-storey. But always with an alarming decrease in stability as you ascend. What is true in philosophy is still more true in theology, that you can never with safety pile speculation on speculation. A doctrine of Christ's person to have a permanent value must have experience, not as its remote, but as its immediate, ground.

The question as to what an experience of Christ yields has already, in our fourth chapter, been under discussion, and all we need do here is to sum up the results reached.

Most elementary and general is the impression that in Jesus' personality, life, and teaching—the three are inseparable—we are face to face with something of unique moral purity and greatness. It is this impression that lies behind the Church's assertion of Jesus' sinlessness. Made on dogmatic grounds, the assertion signifies little or nothing ; it signifies much if it represents what a man with his own eyes has seen.

But in Christian experience there are elements of a more specific character. We can speak of a new vision of God, His Kingdom, and His righteousness as the direct result of contact with Jesus ; a new vision also

of the meaning and possibilities of our human life. We can speak of a new sense of forgiveness, and a new power to overcome evil and achieve the good. We can speak of an awakening or reinforcing of faith and hope and love. We can speak of a conviction begotten within us that, in Jesus, God Himself has come to us, to reveal Himself to us, to call us with a high call, and to redeem our lives from futility and meanness.

To many, doubtless, this account of what religious experience can supply as a basis for christology will seem disappointingly meagre. At the present time the term enjoys a wide vogue. There is a very general recognition that apart from religious experience we shall reach no true understanding either of religion or theology. And this emphasis is surely in the right direction. What we have to complain of is that the term is so often used uncritically and without any sense of its limitations. It is used as a master key that will open every theological lock, or as a conjurer's hat from which all sorts of unexpected articles can be produced at will. From experience the Apostle Paul is supposed to have derived practically his whole dogmatic system.

But the truth is that experience is only one of the elements that enter into the structure of dogma. In no case is dogma, and least of all that of the person of Christ, a simple transcript of experience. Always it contains a theoretical or speculative factor derived from the philosophy current at the time when it was formulated. We have a doctrine of the person of Christ only when Christ, on the ground of experience, is assigned a place in some speculative scheme of the universe, interpreted in terms of some speculative world-view. Christologies ancient and modern have all this double character ; they embody an experience, and equally they embody

a philosophy. Eliminate or ignore either factor, and they become unintelligible.

Taking with us this conception of what doctrine is, we proceed to pass in brief review the salient points in the history of the doctrine of Christ's person. Our object is partly to illustrate what has been said, and partly to criticize. In any critical estimate of a doctrine or phase of it, two main points have to be considered. The first relates to the truth and fullness of the religious experience underlying it; the second to the adequacy and tenableness of the speculative construction.

The earliest christological formula is that in which Jesus is described as the Son of Man. In so describing Him the primitive Church determined His place and work in correspondence with the apocalyptic world-view, which in the first century dominated the thinking of a large section of the Jewish people. Jesus, or rather Jesus risen from the dead, was identified with the superhuman figure in the apocalyptic drama, who should appear at the end of the ages to destroy the enemies of God, judge men and angels, and introduce the eternal kingdom.

It is not easy to find in Christian experience much that could point the way to such an interpretation. What has the gracious if morally austere figure of Jesus in common with the avenging angel of Jewish mythology? And the work assigned to the latter in Jewish literature was for the most part ill-adapted to express what Jesus had accomplished during His earthly sojourn. All that can be said is that Jesus would not have been singled out to play so tremendous a part in the history of the world had He not left on the minds of His disciples an impression of transcendent greatness.

For the vast majority of Christian people to-day

the Son of Man idea, together with the outlook to which it belongs, has little if any living significance. It fulfilled its historical mission in the support it lent to faith in those early years when the triumph of Christ's cause seemed possible in no other way than by a cataclysm that should tumble the existing world in ruins and bring a new world in its place.

Already in the Pauline Epistles the title Son of Man has completely disappeared, and the apocalyptic outlook is visibly ceasing to dominate Christian thought. A new title takes its place, that of the Kyrios or Lord. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." The interpretation of Jesus in terms of the Kyrios conception is unquestionably the greatest landmark in the history of early Christianity, and it is of the first importance to determine what it involves.

That Jesus is the Kyrios means much more than the possession of moral authority and leadership. It means on the one hand that He is a Divine being, a god; and on the other that He is subordinate to the supreme God. Before His human birth He existed "in the form of God," and His Resurrection signified His installation as God's vicegerent in the government of the world. "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth," the risen Christ is made to say to His disciples. From Him alone salvation and help come, and the course of events is under His control. Like the supreme God, He is omnipresent. He exercises, in fact, all the functions of Deity. And believers claim for Him and render to Him the religious homage proper to Deity. Prayers are directed to Him and baptism administered in His name. That a few years after the Crucifixion there was in operation a fully

developed cult in which Christ was worshipped as a God no one now disputes.

But we must not lose sight of the other side. Nowhere in the New Testament, even in the few passages in which He is spoken of as God, is the Lord Christ placed on an equality with the eternal Source of being. Time and again Paul insists on His subordination, and the Fourth Evangelist not less emphatically: "The Father is greater than I." If Christ is Divine, He is not God in the absolute sense, but stands on a lower level. Paul even speaks of a term to His sovereignty (1 Cor. xv. 28).

How shall we explain the advance of the Church from the Son of Man to the Kyrios conception of the person of its founder? Something may perhaps be put down to a deepening of religious experience and a better understanding of its implicates. Certain it is that Paul and his successors found in the Kyrios conception what they could not have found in the apocalyptic, a means of bringing to expression the significance of Christ's earthly ministry, and the fact that in Christ God Himself had drawn near to men. Whether, however, reflection on these considerations had anything to do with the transition must be pronounced highly doubtful. In any case, religious experience and reflection do not, taken by themselves, explain the transition. No experience and no reflection on it could have supplied the information that Christ was a subordinate God who had surrendered His heavenly glory to be born as a child of man, and that as a reward for His self-renunciation the supreme God had given Him a name above every name, and entrusted Him with the government of the world. Obviously such an account of Christ is in terms of a world-view very specific in character; and the only question open is where the source of this world-view is to be sought.

The idea that it was from beginning to end a creation of the Church may at once be set aside. And the radical difference between it and the apocalyptic outlook, or the older outlook of the Hebrew Prophets, lies on the surface. While Judaism admitted mediators between God and the world of an angelic character, it had no place or tolerance for a second God. The Son of Man was in no sense a Divine figure. Of a God who had been born as a man, Judaism knew nothing, and with its strict monotheism such an idea was absolutely incompatible.

But it was far from being incompatible with the popular religious thought of the Hellenistic world. There indeed it was widely current. Every mystery cult had its saviour-god who was thought of not as the ultimate source of things, but, at least in the more philosophic circles, as related to this somewhat remote and abstract being as a potency or manifestation. And of stories of gods who had lived on the earth as men there was no lack. The Egyptian kings were regarded by their subjects as incarnations of Deity ; and it was told of Osiris, the son of the earth god Keb and the heaven goddess Nut, that he had lived for a period among mortals, teaching them civilization and morality, and afterwards ascended to heaven. All the categories of which the Early Church made use in interpreting Jesus as the Lord, lay ready to its hand in the Hellenistic thought of the time.

To many it has seemed incredible that the Church should have gone for its categories to pagan sources. Did it not stand in deadly opposition to paganism and all its works ? The answer is easy. Paul was quite aware that the worship of the Kyrios Christ had its parallels among the pagans, and he was not at all troubled

by the fact. His explanation of it was a simple one: Christ was the true Kyrios, and others to whom the title was given were mere demons. "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth; as there are gods many and lords many; yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Kyrios, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and we through him."

In the course of a few decades the Church ceased to be a predominantly Jewish and became a predominantly Gentile institution; and of its Jewish converts the bulk hailed from outside Palestine and had absorbed something of Hellenistic culture. To the great majority the conception of Christ as the Son of Man could not appear other than foreign, and only half intelligible. Insensibly they would translate it into the Kyrios conception native and familiar to them. How could they think of their Saviour and Judge as occupying a lower rank than the pagan divinities they had been accustomed to adore, or than imperial Cæsar on his merely earthly throne? Moreover, the difference between the older conception and the newer, so radical for us, would to the primitive Church hardly seem considerable.

What we have, therefore, in the Kyrios christology is an interpretation of Jesus' person in terms of the popular world-view of the Hellenistic age. That this interpretation is in every way superior to its predecessor, we have already indicated. It helped to detach Christian faith from the apocalyptic outlook, which every year that passed rendered more incredible, and enabled the Church to settle down to the task of winning the existing world for Christ. Through the idea of the Incarnation it lent itself in a way the apocalyptic scheme of things could not do to the expression and exhibition of the

significance of Jesus' earthly career. Further, there could be read into the Kyrios Christ far more easily than into the Son of Man, with its relatively fixed connotation, the outstanding traits of the Jesus of history. In the thought of the Church, the reign of the former stood for that of holy, saving, self-sacrificing love; while the latter has remained—witness Michael Angelo's painting of "The Last Judgment"—the stern judge and avenging angel of the apocalyptic drama. Finally, the Kyrios conception brought to expression for the first time the fundamental judgment of Christian faith, that in Jesus it is no "mere man" who meets us, but the living God in the might of His saving grace.

These are signal merits; is there anything to be said on the other side?

Often it has been urged that the elevation of Jesus to the throne of Deity had the effect of throwing the supreme God completely into the shade. In his book, *The God of the Early Christians*, President M'Giffert contends that, at least among Gentile Christians, Christ was the only God recognized. While a man like Clement of Rome, who had already felt the influence of Judaism, might make Christ secondary to God, the mass of Gentile Christians, nurtured in a polytheistic atmosphere and seeking from religion nothing but salvation, never thought of asking what Christ's relation was to a God above Him or to the universe. For the Creator God of the Jews they cared nothing, and the monotheistic interest made no appeal to them. The transformation of the Christ cult into a monotheistic religion, M'Giffert argues, was the work of the theologians and apologists—Paul, the Fourth Evangelist, Justin Martin, etc.—who desired to bring it into a larger setting and give it a universal significance. And it was accomplished by

connecting Christ with the Creator God of the Jews. Christ was made the Son of this God; and to His primitive function of Saviour there were added the wider functions of Creator and Judge. But although the theologians succeeded in committing the Church to the recognition of the God of the Jews, this God never amounted to more than a philosophical abstraction. For the theologians no less than for the laity the real God was Christ.

In this statement of the case there is certainly much exaggeration. For the existence of a Christianity indifferent to monotheism, M'Giffert is unable to bring any shred of documentary evidence, and has to explain its absence by supposing that it has perished, or that popular Christianity never found literary expression. At the same time, some overshadowing of God the Father by God the Son is not to be denied. God the Father tended to become a remote figure, identical with the transcosmic and ineffable One of Hellenistic philosophy. The consequences for religion were not, however, so harmful as might be supposed. In worshipping Christ the Church was not really worshipping something lower than God. While Christ represents only one aspect of the Divine, the ethical, this aspect is surely for ever vital and central. In Christ, as Luther said, the very heart of God is revealed to us. Prayer to Christ, which was never the rule in the Church, is open to serious objection only when Christ is set over against God as more ready to hear and answer. Theoretically at least, Augustine opposed a barrier to the tendency in question, when, emphasizing the unity of the Persons, he insisted that in every Divine operation all the three Persons participate.

Another criticism brought against the Kyrios idea

has a larger measure of truth. Unquestionably the preoccupation of the Church with the Kyrios Christ throned in heaven, dispensing His benefits and exercising a present sovereignty, to a considerable extent withdrew attention and interest from the historical Jesus. To a considerable extent the theological interpretation overshadowed and obscured the person interpreted. Of Paul's gospel one can say that it is relatively independent of the Synoptic narrative. That the interpretation is charged with a large measure of the meaning of Jesus' teaching, life, and cross, may readily be granted; but few to-day will contend that it can be accepted as a substitute for the historical reality. It created an epoch in theology and had no small influence on religion when, towards the middle of last century, the historical figure was disentangled from its dogmatic wrappings, and men learned to distinguish between the Jesus of history and the Christ of dogma.

One other criticism. We have said that the Kyrios christology represents an interpretation of Jesus by means of the categories of popular Hellenistic thought. But popular Hellenistic thought was mythological rather than scientific or philosophic in character. Its saviour-gods and its tales of gods who walked the earth in the guise of men palpably belong to a pre-scientific outlook. And the same must be said of the early Kyrios christology, and indeed of popular christology down to the present. Paul's conception of a self-emptying of the pre-existent Christ, however splendid the truth it enshrines, is, as regards its form, mythological. And not less so is his conception of Christ as the conqueror of the demons and as God's vicegerent in the government of the world.

But Christian thought, at least in the ranks of the

cultured, did not long remain at this stage. Already in Paul we can trace the use of categories which have a good title to be called philosophical. When Paul speaks of " one God, the Father, of whom are all things and we unto him ; and one Kyrios, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and we through him," he is casting the Christian creed in a philosophic mould. What is in his mind in so determining the reciprocal relations of God, Christ, and the world is the Logos speculation ; and the adoption of this speculation was the first step in the working out of a Christian metaphysic.

In the Stoic philosophy Logos, in the sense of reason or thought, stood as the principle of the cosmic order, immanent as a sort of subtle, all-pervasive ether in nature and in man. It was, in fact, what the Stoics understood by God. Hellenistic speculation, in that strain of it best known to us through the writings of Philo, took up this idea and fitted it into the dualistic world-view, of which, in the preceding chapter, we have given some brief account.

According to Philo the Logos is the intermediary between the transcendent or transcosmic God and the created world. " I stand in the midst," he is made to say, " between the Lord and you, neither being self-existent like God, nor yet created as you, but being in the midst, a hostage as it were to both." As having come forth from God, the Logos is Divine ; and he sums up in himself the intelligence, the creative purposes, and the ideal ends of the universe. Through him the world was created ; and he is the power that holds it together. He is also God's agent in the work of revelation and redemption. It was he who inspired the prophets ; and the theophanies of the Old Testament are explained as his manifestations. Often it might seem as if Philo

conceived of the Logos not as a personal being, but as impersonal reason—the reason which, having its home in God, goes out from God to create, inform, and govern the world, and to be the light of every human soul. None the less the hypostatizing and personalizing of the Divine Reason is to be taken seriously. Hellenistic speculation, although fundamentally philosophical, was never able, even in its finest forms, to purge itself completely of the mythological leaven. Had the personalizing of the Logos been a mere figure of speech, the Church would hardly have recognized in it its unquestionably personal Kyrios. Such was the origin of the idea that has played so notable a part in Christian theology.

Rendel Harris, among others, tries to make out that the Logos of the New Testament and the Fathers has little in common with that of Hellenistic philosophy, but is a purely Jewish conception, being nothing else than the Sophia or Divine Wisdom of which Proverbs, Sirach, and the Wisdom of Solomon speak. Absolutely fatal to this view is the fact that, as it appears in Christian writers, the conception presupposes a dualistic metaphysic of the Philonic type. It may, however, be conceded that in making use of the Hellenistic conception, Christian writers were not uninfluenced by the fact that something analogous was to be found in the Old Testament and in Jewish literature, and that the language in which they speak of it is frequently drawn from the latter sources.

The resemblances between the Logos of Hellenistic speculation and the Kyrios of the Church were too striking to escape notice. Both were conceived as Divine beings and at the same time as subordinate to the supreme God. Both ruled the world and were

the mediators of salvation to mankind. That Christian thinkers open to Hellenistic culture should sooner or later bring the two into connection was inevitable. And in identifying them, what they in effect did was to interpret the person and work of Jesus in terms of yet another world-view, that of Hellenistic speculation.

Although the Logos christology has often been severely and in some respects justly criticized, it unquestionably marked an advance on any that had preceded, and rendered important services to the new faith. For one thing it enabled the cultured believer to harmonize his religious convictions with his philosophical outlook, thus providing for them a far from inconsiderable support. It enabled him also to define the relation of Christ to God, which the Kyrios christology had left in the vague, with precision and clearness. Christ was the incarnate Logos or Wisdom of God; He had proceeded from God, bearing His image, to be God's instrument in the work of creation and redemption. One God, the eternal source and goal of things; one Kyrios, the mediator between this ineffable Being and the world—that in philosophic terms was the Christian creed. Further, in the new conception there was given a solution of the serious problem created for a monotheistic faith by the elevation of Jesus to a place of Divine honour. No adherent of the Logos philosophy imagined that the existence of the Logos side by side with the transcosmic God involved any infringement of the Divine unity.

Still another merit of the Logos christology has to be mentioned. In the hands of the Apologists it provided a means of relating the culminating revelation of God in Christ with that in nature and in man. It was the same Logos which in its fullness became flesh in Christ

that was immanent in nature as its spiritual basis and the principle of its order, and that inspired the Hebrew prophets, the Greek sages, and, indeed, all who had lived rationally and rightly. One must, however, add that after the third century this fruitful line of thought all but disappeared.

After the close of the New Testament period the Logos christology was developed and modified in more than one direction. Questions were raised which could not be answered by a direct appeal to the apostolic writers. The earliest was of a purely speculative character. How did the Logos Christ, the Son of God, come into being? The New Testament speaks of Him as born first, before all creation, as the only begotten of the Father and as coming forth from God; but of the manner of His birth or begetting or procession it says nothing. It is in the Apologists that we first meet with a theory. The idea of begetting is stressed as excluding that of creation; the Son is not a creature. And to explain the begetting, recourse is had to the Stoic distinction between the indwelling Logos or Reason of God and that which has proceeded from Him as a spoken Word. As a man may be said to beget a word, so God begat the Logos. More definite and philosophical is the idea of emanation, which the Gnostics were bringing into vogue, and in it Tertullian and Origen find the solution of the problem. "The Logos," writes Tertullian, "proceeds forth from God and in that procession He is generated." "God sent forth the Logos as the root puts forth the tree, the fountain the river, the sun the ray. For these are the emanations (*probolai*) of the substances from which they proceed."

The idea of emanation naturally suggests a time process, and this was the sense in which the earlier

patristic thinkers took it. The procession of the Word from the transcendent God was the first act in the great drama of Creation, that act which had creation as its motive and outcome. So Tertullian declares that "there was a time when the Son did not exist," and that the Logos was born and created when God's thought moved towards the creation of the world. Such a conception is not, however, without its speculative difficulties. Is it conceivable that there was ever a time when the Divine reason and will were not active in generating the Word, and, through the Word, creating? Origen answered no; and his doctrine of the Son's eternal generation became the doctrine of the Church.

More important from the ecclesiastical standpoint was the question of the rank of the Son as compared with that of the Father. Everywhere in the New Testament the monotheistic interest leads to an emphatic assertion of subordination. And in Hellenistic speculation the Divine emanations constituted a descending series. The ray of light, though of the same substance with the sun, is not on an equality with it. In making the Son inferior to the Father and the Holy Spirit inferior to the Son, Tertullian and Origen were faithful both to the religious and the philosophical tradition. This tradition became, however, more and more questionable as the implications of the Church's developed doctrine of salvation or redemption made themselves felt.

How are we to think of salvation? Irenæus gives the following account of it: "Those who see God are in God and receive of His splendour, and His splendour vivifies them. For this reason God, though beyond comprehension and boundless and invisible, rendered Himself visible and comprehensible and within the capacity of those who believe, that He might vivify

those who receive Him by faith. For as His greatness is past finding out, so also is His goodness beyond expression ; by which, having been seen, He bestows life on those who see Him. The means of life is found in fellowship with God ; but fellowship with God is to know God and enjoy His goodness. Men, therefore, shall see God that they may live, being made immortal by that sight and attaining even unto God." " For by no other means could we have attained to incorruptibility and immortality unless we had been united to incorruptibility and immortality. But how could we be joined to these unless first they had become that which we also are."

From these quotations it is clear that for Irenæus salvation comprises two things—fellowship with God and immortality. In common with Hellenistic religion, and under its influence, the Church saw in mortality the chief defect and hurt of our human nature and in a blessed immortality the chief boon which religion has to bestow. We can also gather from the quotations how Irenæus thinks of salvation as mediated. Fellowship with God Christ mediates to us in virtue of His character as Revealer : as the Logos-Son, He has a complete knowledge of God and is Himself God's image. Of His mediation of immortality two accounts are given. In the first, which reproduces one of the great Hellenistic ideas, immortality appears as the direct result of the vision of God to which Christ lifts us : " We are made immortal even by that sight." This view was, however, passing into the background in favour of another which exhibited Christ as operating not as Revealer, but in virtue of the fact that His substance or nature as truly Divine was incorruptible. In His incarnation Christ united our human and corruptible nature with

His own Divine nature, so deifying it and making it immortal.

The same complex of ideas reappears in Athanasius. "God," Athanasius writes, "became man that we might be made God; and He manifested Himself through the body that we might take cognizance of the invisible Father." "While it was impossible for the Logos to die, being immortal and Son of the Father, He took to Himself a body capable of death in order that this body, by being made a partaker of the Logos, might be worthy to die instead of all, and through the indwelling Logos might remain incorruptible; and that for the future corruption should cease from all by the grace of the resurrection. Hence by surrendering to death His body as a stainless offering and sacrifice, He obliterated death from all His peers by the offering of the equivalent. For the corruption itself in death has no longer force against men by virtue of the Logos dwelling in them through His own body." The line of thought here pursued, although in some measure obscured by the introduction of the Pauline idea of a vicarious sacrifice, is sufficiently clear. Christ has revealed to us the invisible Father, and by the assumption of our mortal body has made it immortal. The idea of a divinizing through the vision of God drops out.

It is in the light of this conception of Christ's saving work that we are to understand the uncompromising hostility of the Athanasian party to the Arian christology. Along with the Church in general, Arius thought of Deity as constituted by the metaphysical properties of aseity or self-existence, immutability, impassibility, and incorruptibility. When the Fathers spoke of the Divine essence, or Substance, it was these properties they had in view. And these properties Arius denied to the Son.

In the main, he represented in an extreme form the older tradition which insisted on the Son's subordination to the Father. Refusing to draw any distinction between generation and creation, he taught that the Son is a created being, brought into existence by an act of God's will to be God's intermediary in the work of creation and redemption. It could not indeed be said that there was a time when He was not, since time began with His creative activity, but "there was when He was not." Arius seems to have rejected not only Origen's idea of an eternal generation or emanation, but also the emanation idea itself.

To the Athanasian party such an account of Christ seemed utterly incompatible both with the worship which the Church rendered to Christ and the kind of salvation it expected from Him. If Christ was a creature, if He had not the Divine attributes we have named, to worship Him was idolatry. And how could such a Christ guarantee the truth of the revelation He mediated? How, above all, could He effect the deifying of our mortal nature? To be worthy of the Church's worship, and capable of achieving salvation as the Church conceived it, Christ must, in the words of the Nicene formula, be "very God of very God, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father."

In the Nicene christology the early subordinationism is all but obliterated, nothing of it remaining except what may be involved in the distinction between the Father as unbegotten and the Son as begotten. What is more far-reaching in its significance, the generation of the Son becomes not merely an act without beginning or end, as Origen had made it, but an act that stands in no relation to time. Its connection with the economy of creation and redemption, which from Paul downward

had been in the foreground, is completely severed, Divine Fatherhood and Sonhood becoming eternal correlatives. In a word, the economic Trinity is transformed into an immanent, with results that will be noted presently.

The right of the Church to formulate a doctrine of the person and work of its founder, the right of theology in general, is not to be questioned. Theology is just a specialized philosophy, a philosophy which concentrates on the religious problem ; and the speculative instinct is native to the human mind and ineradicable. Nor do we doubt that the patristic thinkers rendered a real service to religion. It is no small support to our faith when its affirmations can be shown to cohere with the knowledge derived from other sources. Moreover it has to be borne in mind that the alternative to the system worked out and adopted by the Church was not an undogmatic Christianity, but some other system like Gnosticism, Modalism, or Arianism. And one ventures to assert that in the numerous controversies of the early centuries the Church in the main took the saner line. That it borrowed its speculative categories from pagan philosophy cannot justly be made a matter of complaint. It could make use only of what was available, and beyond doubt it chose the best. Where in the ancient world can you find a philosophy so spiritual in its basis, noble in its temper, and daring in its speculative flights, as that which received its finest expression in Plotinus ? That in its letter at least it belongs to a past that cannot be revived is true ; but all that this means is that speculative thought is ever on the move. Fortunately or unfortunately, there was, and is, no special caste of philosophers commissioned and inspired by the Holy Ghost to supply an infallible and permanent metaphysic for the use of the faithful.

The right of theology must be recognized, but always with the proviso that theology is not to be substituted for the Gospel as the object of faith and the source of religious quickening. One must therefore demur to the common assertion that in the Arian controversy the very existence of Christianity was at stake. By dogmatic formulas, however correct, Christianity assuredly does not live; nor would the worst of formulas have killed it. Does Jesus Christ cease to exert His saving influence when the constitution of His person is misconceived?

To recognize the historical right and value of the ancient creeds is one thing; to set them up as a norm for all time quite another. If there is any truth in the account we have given of the origin and structure of dogma, the latter procedure is inadmissible. While the experimental element in dogma changes but little from age to age, the same cannot be said of the speculative element. Philosophies come and go; and inevitably a day arrives when a formula has to be revised or discarded. That of Nicea forms no exception to the rule. It may be well to look at some of its limitations and defects.

We begin with this fact, that the doctrine of the Trinity, as at least partially formulated at Nicea, belongs not to the single-storey, but to the multi-storey, class of doctrines. It assumes the truth of the Kyrios and Logos doctrines, of the doctrine that immortality is the great religious boon, and that this boon Christ secured for us through the divinizing of our mortal nature. The peril involved in piling doctrine on the top of doctrine, leaving experience far beneath, has already been pointed out.

Again, the experimental basis of the formula is not only remote but narrow. When a great historical personality or movement is interpreted in the light of a

particular philosophy, there is always both gain and loss. New and significant aspects are indeed suggested; but other aspects not less important, which the philosophy is not fitted to express, are allowed to fall into the background. So it was in the case before us. The Logos philosophy brought into prominence what was unquestionably a matter of experience, the significance of Jesus as Revealer and as Himself Revelation. "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." "The Logos became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Even here there is something to discount. What the New Testament and patristic thinkers understand by revelation is, no doubt, in part the ethical knowledge of God given in Jesus' life and teaching, but in still larger part it is the mysteries of the Logos christology, how God is in Christ and Christ in the believer, how Christ came forth from the Father and returned to Him again. The undeniable drift towards the intellectualizing of religion was in large measure due to the association of Christianity with Hellenistic speculation.

The second great fact of experience which Hellenistic religion, if not Hellenistic speculation, brought into prominence was that Jesus had given to the belief in a life beyond the grave a new force and earnestness. But here again, in the Church's account of the experience, there is not a little that is open to criticism. If the ethical quality of "eternal life" is assumed and, indeed, enforced, far more stress is put on duration. Believers, it is said in the Fourth Gospel, shall "live for ever," "never die," "never perish," "never see death." Must we not say that in the teaching of Jesus the emphasis

is different, that it is the ethical quality of life which appears as the primary matter? Further, it is a departure from Jesus when immortality is made, as the Greek Church made it, the central interest in religion. What is central in the faith and hope of Jesus is something different, the far wider and grander idea of the Kingdom of God: "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." The supersession of the idea of the Kingdom by that of eternal life meant the introduction into Christianity of a one-sided individualism which was not Christian but Hellenistic.

In the experimental basis of the Nicene formula one will also look in vain for forgiveness and moral renewal. The latter drops out because it was conceived as a work of human freedom rather than of redemption. The Christ of the Creed is not the Christ who calls men to life in the Kingdom, grounds in them a new sense of God's forgiving grace, and changes them inwardly, but only the Christ who mediates the knowledge of God and immortality. It is a minor matter that the categories employed to explain this mediating work have long since become obsolete.

Still again, the Logos philosophy on which the Church drew was, with all its excellences, but ill adapted to bring to expression a genuinely Christian conception of Deity. What is God the Father of the Nicene Creed? He is not the God of the Hebrew Prophets and of Jesus: He is the transcendent, ineffable, and inaccessible Ultimate of Philonic and neo-Platonic dualism. His essential properties are not ethical but metaphysical—aseity, immutability, impassibility, incorruptibility. And these properties, it will be observed, are all of a negative character. God is defined as the sheer opposite of the world;

with nature and man He has nothing in common. And the Deity of the Son is conceived in the same way. What makes Christ Divine is not His purity, His mercy, His self-forgetting love, but the possession of the metaphysical properties named, or of those of omniscience and omnipotence. One wonders what eye could discover such properties in Jesus of Nazareth. The truth, of course, is that they derive not from perception or experience, but from the Hellenistic conception of Deity. And the same is true of the Nicene description of the relation between the Father and the Son. The relation is that which the Hellenistic Logos bears to the transcendent God. That the Son is begotten means, when the history of the term is not ignored and the matter treated as an absolute mystery, that He is an emanation from the ultimate and ineffable Source of being.

Certain reservations must, however, in justice be made. The Church did not teach, as Plotinus taught, that the transcendent God is beyond rationality and morality. Only its mystics carried the idea of transcendence to its limit, and sought union with a God who is indescribable by mundane predicates. In insisting on the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, the Church secured for the rational and ethical a place inside the Godhead. But that it recognized within limits the right of transcendental mysticism shows how far it went in the Hellenistic direction. In any case it is impossible to accept as Christian a definition of Deity in which the ethical does not figure among the essentials. What is God? He is the eternal and infinite Power on whom we and all things depend, interpreted in terms of the highest that has come within our experience. Deity so conceived requires another construction than that of Nicea or Chalcedon.

Often it is asserted that in framing the Nicene formula the Church completely discarded the philosophical ideas that were admittedly current among the earlier Christian theologians. "Unthinking persons," writes Bishop Temple, "sometimes ask how members of the Church to-day can consent to express their faith in the terms of Greek metaphysic. The answer is, 'We don't, and we never did.' Apart from the single phrase, 'of one substance,' there is no Greek philosophy in the creeds; and that phrase is so general that it binds no one to any particular scheme of philosophy." [1]

In this assertion there is a certain element of truth. The omission from the formula of the term Logos was perhaps deliberate, even although Athanasius in his writings has no scruple in using it. And, as has already been noted, the economic Trinity of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Origen was changed into an immanent Trinity, the relation between the Persons being treated as wholly independent of the story of creation and redemption. This latter fact undoubtedly amounts to a cutting loose from the speculative train of thought along which the formula had been reached. The cosmological interest, which in the Logos philosophy was central, disappears, and interest is concentrated on the justification of the Christ-cult and the safeguarding of the Church doctrine of redemption. Having achieved these ends, the Church, as Harnack remarks, kicked away the ladder by which they had been reached, and exhibited the result as supernaturally revealed truth in no way hanging on human reasoning.

Whether the substitution of an immanent for an economic Trinity was a step in advance may well be doubted. It meant the surrender of the attempt—

[1] *Christ the Truth*, p. 192.

surely a legitimate and worthy one—to fit the person and work of Jesus into a comprehensive and coherent world-view, and to relate the Divine in Jesus to the Divine in nature and in man. "Instead of the conception of the One God energizing in the world through His outgoing Logos, Athanasius turns to the thought of a mere intra-divine relationship, a mysterious duplication of Divinity which has no direct reference to the world. All that was left of the Logos-conception was the inadequate conception of hypostasis; while the essential thought of the Logos-theology—the thought of the Logos as God immanent in the world—was sacrificed to the new conception of God immanent in God. Athanasius' doctrine thus retained what was most deficient in the Logos-theology, and sacrificed what was best in it." [1]

So long as we isolate the Nicene Creed from its history, read it as a bare assertion of the true Deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit, and treat the relation of the Persons as an absolute mystery, it is not untrue to say that it does not commit us to any philosophy. But the moment we proceed to ask questions, philosophy returns. What are we to understand by the Father? Why should Christ be called the Son? What meaning are we to attach to His begetting and to the procession of the Holy Spirit? What is meant by Divine substance? How can there be three Divine Persons and only One God? Any kind of historical answer to these questions brings back the whole Logos-philosophy. The Father is the transcosmic God of Hellenistic speculation, and His Son is the Logos who proceeded from Him by a process of emanation. Divine Substance is constituted by the

[1] Prof. J. D. Fleming in *The Canadian Journal of Religious Thought*, vol. ii. p. 351.

metaphysical predicates already referred to, and the unity of the three Persons in One God is of the kind provided for by the pluralistic monotheism of the Hellenistic age.

To allow a formula to remain in the position of a mere supernaturally communicated mystery requiring blind acceptance, is a course impossible for thinking people. And the Church has never required this of its members. Always it has left the door open for interpretation and reinterpretation, provided only the letter or, at least, the substance of the formula remains inviolate. Is it not possible, therefore, to put upon the venerable formula of Nicea a meaning that has a genuine modern appeal, reading it in the light not of Hellenistic speculation, but of some more recent philosophy? The history of dogma tells of many such attempts.

Very notable is that of the great Augustine. In venturing with not a little diffidence to throw some light on the sacred mystery of the Trinity, Augustine has recourse to the psychological analogy of memory, understanding, and will, as embraced in the unity of a human mind; and again, to the social analogy of the lover, the beloved, and love, which also form a sort of three in one. Of this attempt it is unnecessary to say anything except that it shows how completely the Church thinkers had broken with the Logos-philosophy and its cosmological associations. Augustine's Trinity is a purely immanent one.

Modern attempts at reinterpretation date from Hegel. In the trinitarian formula Hegel saw a religious and therefore imaginative or pictorial expression of the deepest secret of his own system—namely, the self-differentiation of the Absolute and its return to itself through an inner logical movement. As self-contained and undifferenti-

ated, the Absolute may be called the Father. The world, as the product of the Absolute's self-differentiation and self-unfolding, may be called the Son ; and the higher consciousness in which the difference between the Absolute and the world is transcended, and the world regarded as but a moment in the life of the Absolute, may fitly be described as the Holy Spirit.

Between this scheme and that which forms the early background of the Nicene formula there are at least two vital points of resemblance. In both the cosmological question is central, and in both the cosmic process is exhibited as one of Divine self-unfolding and self-manifestation. There is, however, this cardinal difference, that while the older scheme is dualistic and makes God transcosmic, the newer is monistic and immanental. For Hegel the Infinite is not outside but in the finite, the Eternal not outside but in the temporal. There is, in fact, no current philosophy that takes seriously the idea of two worlds, an uncreated and a created, a perfect and an imperfect. Dualism in this sense of the term has, even in its Kantian form, disappeared.

Judged from the Church standpoint, the Hegelian scheme is condemned by its failure to provide any place for Christ. The second member of its Trinity is not Christ but the world. Christ's significance does not go beyond the fact that He was the first in whom the consciousness of the oneness of God and the world appeared in approximately perfect form.

The more recent attempts at reinterpretation proceed on two lines. A number of writers, in order to find the place for Christ which Hegel failed to find, have broken with monism and returned to something like the antique dualism with its transcendent God. By the Father, according to Ménégoz, we are to understand God as

transcendent; by the Logos-Son, God as immanent in humanity, revealing Himself in history, above all, in the historical fact of Jesus; and by the Holy Spirit, God as immanent in the human soul. In his early book, *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, Inge presents very much the same circle of ideas. "The Son," he writes, "is the self-limiting principle in God's nature. God limits Himself with a view to manifesting and communicating Himself; and the eternal kenosis in the Godhead is the necessary condition of the temporal kenosis in the Incarnation. It belongs to God's nature to come out of His transcendence and solitude, and to manifest and communicate Himself; and the principle which makes this necessary we call the Logos." Garvie writes to the same effect: "God as absolute, infinite, eternal, transcendent, is for Christian thought the Father. God as so limiting Himself as to reveal and communicate Himself to man is the Son." "This movement of self-limitation and revelation," he adds, "proceeds through nature and history and culminates in Jesus Christ."[1]

All these constructions, it will be observed, connect not with the immanent and static scheme of Athanasius and Augustine, but with the economic one of Tertullian and Origen, the existence of the Son being treated as relative to a cosmic process of Divine self-manifestation. To those of a speculative turn of mind this will seem a signal merit. At the same time the constructions lie open to more than one serious objection. Already we have criticized the idea of a Divine self-unfolding as inadequate to express the moral earnestness of the Christian world-view. It is also inadequate to express the historical significance of Jesus. To say that Jesus

[1] *The Purpose of God in Christ*, p. 40. Cf. also *The Christian Doctrine of the Godhead*, p. 470 ff.

is the culminating point of the self-revealing process may, if we add "in the moral domain," be true; but it is certainly not the whole truth. Jesus' work, as He Himself thought of it and as it discloses itself to Christian experience, is inseparably related to the Kingdom of God. He came to call to repentance, to fit men for life in the Kingdom, to seek and save the lost, to give His life a ransom for many. It is impossible to bring all this under the rubric of Divine self-manifestation.

And there is another objection equally serious. The schemes in question assume the validity of the Logos-philosophy. It is true that the more patently antique features of that philosophy are eliminated—its emanations and its mythological hypostatizing and personalizing of the mediating Logos. But its dualism, the dualism of a transcosmic God and a created world, is retained; and this fact will be a stumbling-block to those who cannot, when they enter the domain of theology, forswear their modern ways of thinking.

The second line of recent reinterpretation attaches itself to the social analogy suggested by Augustine. "The Sonship of Jesus," H. R. Mackintosh argues, "is no mere temporal creation, but the expression within time of an eternal fact. But to see that Christ was the Son before the ages, is to see that God was Father. It plants the Fatherhood inside the Divine." If it be objected that God had the world as the object of His love, Mackintosh replies that the world forms no adequate object. The physical cosmos cannot be loved or love; and there is no certainty that finite spirits existed from the first. Only by supposing an eternal Son can we think of God as no empty void, but the home of the loftiest spiritual relations.[1] To this social Trinity, or rather

[1] *The Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, pp. 516 ff.

Duality—for the third member usually drops out—Gore, Tennant, and many others commit themselves.

Unlike the preceding, the social Trinity is not of the economic but of the immanent variety, and therefore stands nearer to that of Nicea. The motive behind it is not, however, quite the same, to safeguard, namely, the Divinity of Christ and a particular doctrine of redemption. Rather is the Nicene formula accepted as authoritative, and the attempt made to lend it a new support by showing that it solves an exigent problem —the problem how the transcendent God can be self-sufficient, how a full life was possible for Him before there was a world to occupy His attention. This problem the eternal Sonship of Christ solves; for such Sonship means that God is no empty void, but the home of the loftiest spiritual relations.

One may well doubt the utility of carrying speculation to such dizzy heights, particularly when it has no more solid basis than a series of other speculations. For those who are unable to make themselves at home in the antique two-world philosophy, neither the problem nor its solution will possess any reality. It is a minor matter that in order to reconcile the idea of a Divine Society with the personality of the Deity, the adherents of the scheme have to postulate the existence of an entity, admittedly without any analogy in human experience, midway between a person and a faculty. The social scheme can hardly be regarded as anything better than a piece of empty scholasticism.

A construction like that of Nicea cannot be tinkered with without the sacrifice of its inner coherence. What we get as the result is not a scheme that will satisfy the modern mind, but a fantastic hybrid. If the time-honoured formula is to be retained as a Church symbol,

it should be left not only in its original form, but with its original meaning. It is at least an impressive historical monument of Christian thought. Nay, more, discounting the philosophy behind it, we can see in it a venerable witness to this great and vital truth, that we do not think in a Christian way about the God on whom we depend, unless we include in our thought all that is signified by the life and cross of Jesus, and all that is signified by the motions of the Divine Spirit of truth and love within the human soul. We can even get an equivalent, if not an exact one, for the first Person of the Nicene Trinity if we say that our thought of God must include the world in its mystery, wonder, order, and beauty. That much Christian faith and experience support. Many, no doubt, will want more than this, some kind of speculative construction. Limiting one's self to an historical scheme, one might say of Jesus that He is the supreme moral and religious personality in whom God has come to us in a culminating way to awaken and nourish within us faith and love and hope, and to build up on this sin and sorrow-stricken earth a Kingdom of God. If, not content with an historical, we ask a cosmic, scheme, it will not be got by adapting some existing philosophy, but only by independent building on a Christian foundation.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BIBLE

THAT in the Bible, as in no other book, God speaks to us, lays His hand upon us and moves us, is a fact of experience to which the Church throughout its history has borne consistent testimony, and which few with any feeling for ethical religion will be disposed to question. Its immeasurable superiority, from the literary as well as from the religious point of view, to all other sacred writings is patent to every unbiased mind, and need not be dwelt upon. By the intrinsic worth of its contents it stands, and will stand, as one of God's greatest gifts to the human race, an imperishable and altogether priceless heritage.

The Bible has done, and is doing, its work for the most part independently of theories regarding it. And yet a theory is inevitable, were it only because one that has long ceased to be credible still dominates the thinking of a vast body of Christian people, to the hurt of religion, and must be replaced by a better. Three main questions are in dispute. The first relates to the essential content of the Bible: What are the materials comprised in it? The second question relates to its function: What does it offer for our religious need? The third is one of origin: How can we explain the fact that so wonderful a book came to be written? In considering these three closely connected questions, we shall naturally

be guided by the principles laid down in the preceding pages. We begin with the question of content, and our answer to it will occupy the larger part of the chapter.

In the Old Testament two main streams of religious thought and feeling run side by side—the prophetic stream and the priestly or ritualistic. To have distinguished between these two streams, traced them to their sources, sorted out their documents, and made clear their relation to one another, rank among the greatest achievements of Old Testament criticism.

What are we to understand by prophetic religion? Its essential feature is its radically ethical character. It is the faith, at once simple, vital, and great, that this world of ours in which there is so much that is mysterious and so much that is sad and evil, is under the government of a just, merciful, all-wise, all-seeing, and all-powerful God, who calls nations and individuals from wrong-doing to right-doing, visits iniquity with punishment and penitence with pardon, and in all His working has the design of redeeming mankind to a nobler, friendlier, and happier life, building up a veritable Kingdom of God. This faith had its beginning far back in Hebrew history, and indeed in the history of the race; but it is the imperishable glory of the grand succession of Hebrew prophets that they developed it into something approaching purity and universality, and made it determinative for the religion of their nation.

The priestly or ritualistic stream of religion is not to be opposed to the prophetic in any absolute way. Its exponents, who belonged to the post-exilic period, accepted the chief prophetic ideas; and Deuteronomy and certain of the Psalms show us that an ethical piety could quite well be combined with deep respect for the temple service and the legal system. None the less,

the difference between the two is sufficiently profound. In priestly piety the ethical interest, although far from being absent, is overshadowed by the ceremonial. Religion becomes legalistic or nomistic, a matter of the punctilious observance of a system of statutory commandments irrespective of their moral bearing.

Of prophetic religion the chief documents are, of course, the writings of the great prophets from Amos downwards, and the Book of Psalms. As inspired by the same spirit, although older than the canonical prophets, we must also include the Yahwistic and Elohistic narratives incorporated in the Pentateuch; and, coming down to a later day, many of the stories—those of Elijah and Elisha, for example—contained in the Books of Samuel and Kings. In Deuteronomy, notwithstanding the fact that it is a law book, the type of piety is distinctly prophetic, as it is also in the Books of Job, Ruth, Jonah, and, with qualifications, Proverbs.

Priestly and nomistic religion comes first clearly into view in Ezekiel. In the priestly narrative of the Pentateuch it appears in a much more developed form; and in Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, it reaches its climax.

There are sections of the Old Testament that cannot properly be brought under either of the foregoing heads. The Song of Songs is a series of love poems, and perhaps owes its place in the Canon to the fact that it is susceptible of allegorical interpretation. Esther is a monument of mere nationalism, and Ecclesiastes a radically sceptical production. Not a few of the stories preserved in the historical books—the story of the Levite in the Book of Judges, for example—have no particularly religious colour, although they may have an interest of another kind.

Judged from the religious standpoint, the New Testament is much more homogeneous than the Old. Every-

where the faith of Jesus, which is just the ethical faith of the prophets broadened, deepened, and freed from the last remnants of particularism, comes to more or less clear and full expression, if under other forms of thought than His. We can, however, speak of minor differences in type due to the influence partly of Judaism and partly of Hellenistic religion. At certain points there is a distinct tendency towards individualism, and again towards intellectualism or even a new legalism. But these tendencies are hardly pronounced enough to trouble the main current.

The greatest thing in the Bible, the root of all in it that has religious value, is its prophetic or ethical faith. This faith it is which makes the Bible a living book of religion for us to-day. Whatever in the Bible is alien to, or inconsistent with it, we discount as belonging to a world that has been left behind. And it is its ethical faith that more than anything else gives to the Bible the measure of religious unity it possesses—a unity which, though not absolute, is very real. It links together the Old Testament and the New. If the two Testaments can be regarded as a single book, it is because the movement which had its centre in Jesus was not unconnected with the prophetic, but related to it as flower to bud, fulfilment to promise.

Sometimes the fundamental and unifying element in the Bible is described not as a distinctive faith, but as a distinctive religious experience. Men of old had the vision of God in human affairs; they felt the touch of God's hand upon them in some moment of need; they were lifted out of horrible places by His grace, and the Bible is the record of what they saw and heard and felt.[1] Between the two ways of looking at the matter

[1] Fosdick, *The Modern Use of the Bible*, pp. 54 ff.

there is, however, no real difference. The story of religious experience, what is it but the story of faith in its generation and growth, its hard wrestle with the recalcitrant facts of life, its triumphs, and sometimes, alas, its defeats? If we use the latter term rather than the former, it is because it describes with greater precision what at heart religion is.

For an understanding of the religious structure of the Bible, a clear apprehension of the fundamental significance of its ethical faith is the first of requisites. From this standpoint the vital contents of the Bible can be gathered up under a series of heads. First of all we have the direct proclamation, as in the Prophets, the Psalms, the Synoptic Gospels, and partly in the apostolic writings, of the ethical faith itself in one or other of its aspects. Next, there is the element of cultus considered as an instrument of faith. Third, there is the element of history as interpreted by faith. Fourth, there is the element of doctrine; and last, that of prediction, both having faith as their basis, and both serving as its medium and instrument. Of each of these constituents—preaching, cultus, history, doctrine, and prediction—it is necessary to give some brief account.

1. The first can be dismissed with a few sentences. How inspired the preaching of the greater prophets is, how vibrant with moral passion, how magnificent in its certitude and in what matchless language clothed, does not need to be said. Nor need we enlarge on its content. The cardinal features of ethical religion are brought once for all to clear and deathless expression, so that no second foundation requires to be laid.

The faith which the Prophets preach the Psalmists sing. Although we cannot claim for the latter originality in ideas—they reproduce truths which had long been

familiar—their work at its best is scarcely less inspired than that of the great pathfinders. That they are moved to write by the need for self-expression rather than by the missionary fire which burned in the bones of a Jeremiah belongs to their character as poets, and in no way detracts from the power of their witness. The breadth and depth of the religious experience represented in the Psalter make it worthy of being the hymn-book of humanity.

The preaching of Jesus we do not venture to characterize; it is as unique as His personality. Although the gospel of the apostolic writers is in general cast in the mould of doctrine, it contains not a little of what can be called undogmatic teaching. It is sufficient to refer to Paul's hymn to love, and to the exhortations with which he concludes his Epistles.

2. In the Old Testament, cultus bulks very large indeed, forming the main content of a considerable number of books. The first thing to be said about this cultus is that it was not the creation of prophetic religion, but an inheritance from the distant past. It grew up on the soil of a religion the connection of which with morality, as we understand the term, was of the slightest. With moral ideas the distinction between the clean and unclean, rites of purification, circumcision, the agricultural festivals, the whole system of sacrifice and offerings had originally nothing whatever to do. In no sense were these institutions the instruments of an ethical faith.

What could the Prophets with their profound ethical feeling make of such an apparatus of worship? What they did with it was to repudiate it. "I hate and despise your feasts," cries Amos, speaking in the name of God, "and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though you offer me your burnt-offerings and meat-

offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. But let judgment roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. Did ye bring unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?" Not less uncompromising is the language of Isaiah. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. I am full of the blood-offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to trample my courts?"

How, then, it will be asked, did a cultus radically foreign to the prophetic faith come to find a place in a book in which that faith is the central and dominating element? We are taken back to the story of an inevitable compromise. While the Prophets denounced the traditional worship, they had nothing to offer in its place, except indeed righteous conduct; and they do not seem to have reflected on the need for a substitute. The option, therefore, was not between the old cultus and a better, but between the old and none at all. We cannot wonder that the mass, even of those sympathetic with the prophetic teaching, refused to take the radical path. All that was possible was a compromise. The traditional cultus was retained, but with certain modifications dictated by the higher conception of religion which had come to prevail. Even before the days of the canonical prophets there had been attempts at a purgation and a gradual fading out of primitive ideas; but the prophetic teaching gave to the cause of reform an immense impetus, and led to changes more considerable than had previously been entertained. Deuteronomy, the second half of Ezekiel, and the priestly revisions of the

national history and the legal and ceremonial tradition represent the cardinal documents of the reform movement.

How far is the reform carried? This much at least can be said, that the grosser elements of the old cultus, such as idolatry, human sacrifices, sacred prostitution, and everything savouring of polytheism, disappear, or are placed under the ban, and that for the safeguarding of such reforms the worship is centralized in Jerusalem, and subjected to strict regulation. Can we speak of reinterpretation? Only to a comparatively slight extent. The festivals, originally agricultural in character, lose their association with nature and become memorials of great events in which the hand of God was visible in the history of the nation. Circumcision is interpreted as the seal of God's covenant with Israel. In Deuteronomy the Sabbath law is based on humanitarian motives. Sometimes the offering is treated as an expression of thankfulness to God for His gifts. That is about all. In general, while the primitive meaning of the ritual is for the most part forgotten or rejected—sacrificial blood is still, however, regarded as having mystical cleansing properties—no higher meaning takes its place. If the flesh of the hare or the pig is rejected as food, it is not, as in primitive days, because it is taboo and dangerous, but neither is it for any more acceptable reason. As it lies before us in the Old Testament, the cultus is in essence what it had always been, a monument of natural or non-ethical religion. No conceivable reinterpretation could have altered its fundamental character. That it survived so long side by side with an ethical faith was due, not to its inherent qualities, but to the force of long prescription, and still more to the fact that it was regarded as part of the law given by Yahweh to His people. When the pious Jew brought

his gift to the altar, it was from loyalty to God's express command, or, in more liberal circles, because he saw in the ritual a symbol of spiritual worship. For the modern reader, the levitical sections of the Old Testament possess no more than an antiquarian interest.

Is it otherwise with the ritual of the New Testament? No more than that of the Old was it a creation of ethical religion. Lustration and the sacred meal are institutions as old as sacrifice, and as materialistic in their primitive meaning. But of them we can say what we could not say of the Old Testament cultus, that they proved themselves susceptible of such reinterpretation as made them genuine instruments of an ethical faith.

In the Mystery Cults lustration or baptism had already a fourfold significance. It was a sacrament of initiation into the cult, of union with the cult god, of cleansing, and of regeneration. While the Church added no new aspect, it gave to the whole a decisively ethical reference which was to a very large extent new. As conceived in the New Testament, the Church, into the fellowship of which believers are initiated, is an ethical as well as a religious society, the Christ with whom believers are united is the embodiment of the ethical ideal, and cleansing and regeneration are fundamentally ethical experiences. In its spirit, therefore, if not in its letter, the Sacrament of Baptism was recast to adapt it to the needs of ethical religion.

The earliest meaning attached to the Christian Supper was that of a memorial of Christ's sacrificial death, and an expression of faith in His return in glory: "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do show forth the Lord's death until he come." So understood the rite had its affinities with the Jewish Passover rather than with the sacred meals of the Hellenistic age. But already in Paul we find a second inter-

pretation, the Hellenistic source of which is too patent to be denied. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion with the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ, seeing that we who are many are one bread, one body; for we all partake of the one bread." Here the Supper appears as the medium of an intercourse of believers with the risen and living Christ, and with one another in Christ. Hellenistic in its origin is also the further idea that the sacramental elements are sacred food and drink, the appropriation of which carries with it immortality. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

How far the sacraments are regarded in the New Testament as merely symbolic of spiritual realities and how far as supernatural or miraculous—some would say magical—in their action is a difficult question which cannot be discussed here. What is certain is, that the prevailing tendency was in the latter direction, and that it had behind it the pagan parallel.

As was said of Baptism, so it can be said of the Supper, that if its general meaning was old, the spirit of which it became the vehicle was to a large extent new. It surely signified much that the communion was not with a mythical and only half-moral figure like Attis or Serapis, but with the Lord Jesus Christ. After nineteen centuries the rite is still vital, and serves a great end in bringing Christ before our minds in the power of His faith and His love.

The cultus of the New Testament is not, however, exhausted by the two sacraments. We read of assemblies for prayer and praise, for the reading of Scripture and for the word of exhortation. These assemblies had

their prototype in the services of the second Temple and of the Synagogue. Here, at least, we have a cultic element which did not grow up on the soil of paganism, but was from the bottom the creation of an ethical faith.

3. A very large part of the Bible is occupied with history—the history of the chosen people and their institutions, of Jesus and the early mission, all presented from the standpoint of faith.

The Old Testament narrators begin their story with the creation of the world and carry it down to the return from exile and the establishment of the Jewish theocracy. For their material they were dependent on older documents, copious extracts from which they incorporate in their own work, and to a much smaller extent on floating tradition. The sources at their disposal were not all of the same value ; and their narrative shows all the gradations from myth, saga, and legend to reliable history. As scientific historians we cannot regard them. To sift evidence and discriminate between fact and fancy was no part of their aim ; their aim was a religious one, to show how, from the dawn of time, God had His chosen people in view, how He brought them into being, established them in the Land of Promise, and watched over their destinies. History religiously interpreted—that is what the Old Testament narrators give us.

In reflecting on God's dealings with Israel, the Prophets had adopted from the past or struck out for themselves many interpretative ideas. Most fundamental and ancient is the idea of recompense. "Say ye unto the righteous that it shall be well with him ; woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him," is part of every prophetic message. Again there are the ideas of redemption and revelation. In the deliverances which had established Israel as a nation and preserved her

corporate existence, and in the gift of teachers and leaders like Moses, the Prophets recognize God's redeeming and revealing activity. Still again, there is the idea of the vicissitudes of Israel's history as a process of moral discipline. "He humbled thee and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee to know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

Of far-reaching importance for the religious interpretation of history was the prophetic conception of Israel's relation to her God and of her national task and destiny. In the earlier Yahwism, as in all merely national religion, this relation was regarded as natural and indissoluble. The people belonged to their god and the god to his people. It was something new, therefore, when Amos put into Yahweh's mouth the words, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I visit upon you all your iniquities." For the natural relation there was substituted an ethical one, and the covenant idea became dominant. God's choice of Israel was declared to be an act of grace, and His continued favour to depend on her moral fidelity. Nor was this all.

The great prophet of the restoration, following up earlier hints, developed the sublime conception that Israel's election was not to privilege but to service, that it was her high mission to mediate to the world the knowledge of the true God and be God's instrument in the world's redemption. It was a further elaboration of this conception when Israel's sufferings at the hand of her Babylonian conquerors were treated, not with the earlier prophecy as punishment for her own sin, but as

punishment for the sin of the world. God had laid upon Israel the sin of the guilty "many" in order that He might turn to them, their sin being thus vicariously expiated, with forgiveness and healing. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." What the prophet enunciates under the time-form of vicarious punishment is the great idea of vicarious suffering and its redemptive efficacy.

A splendid array of significant ideas for any historian trying to discover in the mazes of the human story a Divine meaning and purpose, and the operation of eternal principles! Were the Hebrew historians equal to the task of applying them? It must be admitted that, at least in the case of the priestly redactors or compilers who provide the setting for earlier material, the shortcomings and failures are more conspicuous than the successes. Of the idea of history as a Divine discipline, and of national existence as a vocation to world service, their work shows hardly a trace. If that of redemption is introduced, it is less in its spiritual than in its material aspect. Prominence is indeed given to the idea of revelation, early history being exhibited as stages of a Divine revelation which finds its culmination in Moses. The conception of revelation adopted is, however, legal and ritualistic rather than religious and ethical. Of the significance of the prophetic movement there is hardly an inkling.

The main principle with which the priestly compilers operate is that of recompense; and the way in which they apply it is for the most part forced and mechanical. In the Book of Judges disaster is made to follow on transgression and prosperity on repentance with a regularity

and promptitude which the course of human affairs is far from exhibiting. Moreover the norm by which history is judged is much more ritualistic than moral, the great question being that of the right cultus, as in certain circles to-day it is that of the right Church and the right form of ecclesiastical organization. What God is concerned to punish is, above all, ritual transgressions—any invasion of the priestly prerogative or infraction of the law of the one central sanctuary. If the prophetic outlook on history is not altogether lost, it is narrowed and troubled by the sacerdotal.

What draws the reader to the narratives of the Old Testament is not their philosophical setting but their own undying charm and moral significance. We read them as a series of tales, and especially as tales about impressive personalities. In the literature of the world there is no such picture gallery. We think of the story of Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Jephthah, Samson, Saul, David, Absalom, Solomon; the story of Elijah, Ahab, and Jezebel, of Ruth and of Daniel. These stories captivate us by their sheer human interest, and by the simplicity and grace of the language in which they are told. We find in them romance and deep pathos and high tragedy. What more romantic than the tale of Joseph, sold by his envious brethren to slavery in Egypt, and rising by force of mind and character to be ruler over all the land? or than that of the shepherd lad who became Israel's hero king? Where in literature is there anything more moving than the closing scenes of Absalom's rebellion? "We have the wonderful picture of the messengers from the field of battle, and the King sitting between the two gates, knowing that for him there was pain and perplexity whichever way the battle had gone. The struggle between King and father in one

man's soul is given, not in any feeble comment, but in direct dramatic speech. 'And the king said unto the Cushite, Is it well with the young man Absalom? And the Cushite answered, The enemies of my lord the king and all that rise up against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is. And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!'" [1] As an example of the tragic note, take the story of Naboth's vineyard, with its rapid succession of dramatic scenes—the covetous Ahab and his imperious wife, the arraignment and murder of Naboth, the meeting of King and prophet in the pleasure garden, and last, Jezebel and Ahab's bloody death.

But there is much more in these Bible stories than literary charm and dramatic interest. No authentic delineation of life is without some moral and religious appeal, even when, as in the plays of Shakespeare, there is no explicit intention of pointing a moral. Good and evil are set before us, and the action of eternal principles is exemplified. And in the case before us the narrators are not only artists but teachers. They bring into relief those qualities—kindness, loyalty, generosity, courage, truth, faith, dutifulness—that are the strength and glory of our human life, and their opposites that degrade: the first, that we may admire and seek after them; the second, that we may despise and shun them. They teach that the call of God is to obedience and service; if God knew Abraham, it was that Abraham might command his children and household after him, to keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment, and that in him

[1] W. G. Jordan, *Ancient Hebrew Stories and Their Modern Interpretation*, p. 256.

all the nations of the earth might be blessed. And it is equally their aim to bring out the presence and working of God in human affairs, now as a God of mercy and again as a God who brings the devices of the wicked to nought or overrules them for good.

For the intelligent reader the presence in the Bible of myth and saga has long ceased to be an offence. We have learned that religious truth can touch our conscience through the medium of the imagination as well as through that of sober fact. Myth is the product of a period in tribal or national history when thinking was uncontrolled by any knowledge of the real connection of things. In attempting to solve such problems as the origin of the world, of the human race, of evil, of death, of his own and surrounding tribes, uncivilized man had perforce to make use of such crude suggestions or analogies as his experience provided. In a word, the myth represents pre-scientific thinking. And it is also associated with a primitive morality or absence of morality, and with primitive religious conceptions. With the advance of culture the myth may disappear, or again it may be subjected to a process of remoulding. What things of beauty the Greeks of the classical age made of their inherited myths we know. The Hebrews had not the same æsthetic instinct, but they had strong moral feeling and their ethical faith. What the prophetic narrators did with their myths, which for the most part were not native, but borrowed from Babylonian sources, was to clear them as far as possible from elements that were polytheistic or offensive to morality, and make them the vehicles of their own religious conceptions. It will be sufficient if we cite as illustrations the story of the Fall and the Tower of Babel, and the patriarchal family connections.

In the New Testament the great historical element, one supreme in its significance, is, of course, the story of Jesus. And here, as in the Old Testament, the narrative is written from the standpoint of faith.

In the case of a narrative so sacred for Christian feeling it is only natural that there should be some revulsion against its subjection to criticism. Many who are tolerant of criticism in the field of the Old Testament are intolerant of it here. And yet the modern criticism of the Gospels is a fact to be reckoned with; we cannot simply shut our eyes to its results, but must, so far as these are irrefutable, learn to adjust ourselves to them. The extreme critical position, which denies to the Gospels any historical value, one can leave out of account. Neither the number nor the eminence of its representatives entitles it to overmuch consideration. But there is a sane criticism to which we cannot refuse to listen.

That the Gospel story was preserved and committed to writing by men who were themselves believers and who aimed at winning others to their faith, does not in itself throw suspicion on the truth of their narrative. Who else would or could have preserved it? Who else would or could have written it? At the same time, the combination of history and interpretation had certain results which present the modern student with a problem of extreme difficulty. The problem is to determine where the one ends and the other begins. In the Gospels as they lie before us, and in the sources—both written and unwritten—behind them, we have to reckon with a tendency to turn interpretation into history. Sayings of Jesus which appeared inconsistent with the dogmatic faith of the Church were modified or suppressed, and sayings were ascribed to Jesus which were in reality an expression of that faith. And the tendency in question

had also a disturbing effect on the tradition of what Jesus did, and what happened in connection with Him.

Where this tendency produces its maximum effect is in the Fourth Gospel. As is now very widely admitted, the Fourth Gospel cannot be used as an independent source for our knowledge of Jesus' teaching. The discourses it records, which are mainly occupied with Jesus' significance and His relation to God and to man, represent, not His own words, but the witness of the Church concerning Him. They are affirmations of the Church's faith under the guise of self-witness.

As historical documents the first three Gospels stand on quite another level. Their account of Jesus' teaching is in its substance authentic. And yet even there the influence of Church theology is at many points unmistakable. In matters that have become dogmatically objectionable, the later Evangelists have no scruple in correcting the earlier. Here are a few instances in which Marcan sayings are revised by Matthew or Luke, obviously on dogmatic grounds: that Jesus refused the title good, that He did not know the day or hour of the Son of Man's coming, that He had no authority to decide places in the Kingdom, that He had to ask what the disciples disputed about, that His power to work miracles was limited by human faith. In his account of the Crucifixion, Luke omits the cry of dereliction reported by the other Synoptists, and makes Jesus die with a prayer for His murderers.

Many Synoptic passages report Jesus as referring to Himself, usually in a more or less veiled and indirect way, as the Son of Man. The Son of Man, unlike the Baptist, came eating and drinking; He is the sower of the good seed; He has power on earth to forgive sin; He has not where to lay His head; He came to seek and

save the lost, to minister and give His life a ransom for many; at His second coming He will be ashamed of those who were ashamed of Him; He must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. In answer to the High Priest's question, "Art thou the Christ?" Jesus replies, "I am, and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."

How are we to read these and similar passages, as self-witness on the part of Jesus, or as Church-theology put into His mouth? There are several considerations that seem to point, at least in the majority of cases, to the latter conclusion. Sometimes a comparison of the sources shows that if the reference to the Son of Man is present in one source it is absent in another. While in Mark, Jesus speaks of the Son of Man at His coming as being ashamed of those who refused to confess Him before men, in Luke there is only the personal pronoun—"Him will I also deny." Again the persecution for the Son of Man's sake which Luke makes Jesus foretell is absent in the parallel passage in Matthew (Luke vi. 22, Matt. v.). And in the former passage there are other features which betray revision from a later standpoint.

In the case of the passage about the Sabbath, the reference to the Son of Man must be regarded as a later interpolation for the reason that it entirely misses Jesus' thought. Not the Son of Man but man is lord of the Sabbath—that is the interpretation which the context requires. Fatal to the genuineness of most of the references is what we are told about Peter's confession of faith at Cæsarea Philippi. That confession was prompted, the narrative implies, not by intimations or cryptic hints on the part of Jesus, but by Peter's own perception

and experience: "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Fatal also is the meaning which the term, Son of Man, bore in the thought of the time. The Son of Man was an angelic figure who would come with the clouds of heaven, when the last hour of the existing order had struck, to judge the world and introduce the eternal Kingdom. That Jesus should have attributed to this eschatological figure the work of sowing the seed of the word, forgiving sin, seeking the lost, is incredible.

There remain the cases in which the reference occurs after the incident at Cæsarea Philippi and in an eschatological connection. That towards the close of His career, when its tragic issue had become clear to Him, Jesus found support for His own faith in the idea that He would return as the Son of Man to bring in the Kingdom whose advent was the passion of His life, and that He sought to prepare the minds of His disciples for the trials in front of them by assuring them of His return, there is no reason for disbelieving. Nor need we doubt the historicity of His acceptance of the Messianic title before the High Priest. Was He not crucified as a pretender to Kingship?

It is idle to disguise the fact that this whole subject of Jesus' conception of His person is shrouded in obscurity and uncertainty. The influence of the dogmatic faith of the Church in shaping the tradition is patent to every candid student, and how much will be left standing after a sane criticism has done its work, it is hard to say. Was there a time when Jesus thought of the Messiah as an earthly and human figure, such as is described in the Second Isaiah, rather than as an eschatological? Did He attempt to relate the one to the other? Was there a time when He was content to think of Himself as a

prophet? To such questions no certain answer can be returned. The materials at our disposal do not enable us to say how precisely Jesus thought of Himself, except —though here not a few would disagree—that it was in Messianic terms. The common practice of claiming the authority of Jesus for a christology that is not in Messianic terms, but in those of a later day, is, of course, wholly illegitimate.

The same difficulties present themselves when we attempt to determine how Jesus conceived of His work. Certain simple statements of it do indeed stand above dispute: He came to call sinners to repentance, to preach the Gospel or sow the good seed of the Word, to seek and save the lost. But it is otherwise when we come to statements of a more theological character. In this case we have to reckon with the possibility, nay, with the probability, that their ultimate source is not Jesus but the Church. We take as an example the well-known passage: "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son save the Father; neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him." To recognize the strain of thought to which this conception of Jesus' work belongs, we have only to set the passage side by side with another from the Fourth Gospel: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." The conception is Johannine and Hellenistic, God being thought of as a transcendent Being whom only the Logos-Son knows and can reveal. In general, it has to be recognized that where we meet with theology in the Gospels—the saying about Peter and the Church may be cited as another example—the probability is that it is not really Jesus but the Church that speaks.

We have said that not only the tradition of the sayings but also the tradition of the events has been at certain points disturbed and modified by the influence of the Church's dogmatic faith. In the eyes of the Evangelists and of the Christian community the chief proofs of Jesus' supernatural dignity and office were the miraculous elements in His career, and the correspondence of the details of His life with the ancient prophecies. From this standpoint we can understand the prominence given to miracle and fulfilled prophecy in the Gospel narrative. But we have to reckon with something that goes beyond mere emphasis. In the interests of faith and at its prompting, by a process that worked unconsciously, the element of the marvellous in Jesus' life was sharpened and new marvels created. We can see the process going on before our eyes. Mark records that Jesus peremptorily refused the demand of the Pharisees for a sign from heaven: "Verily, I say unto you, there shall no sign be given to this generation." Matthew, on the other hand, makes Jesus promise the sign of the prophet Jonah: "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." The parable of the barren fig tree is transformed into the miracle of the tree that is blasted by Jesus' word. In the Fourth Gospel we have the story of the raising of Lazarus, with detail after detail added to heighten the impression of miraculousness. How is it that the earlier Evangelists pass by this stupendous miracle on which much is made to hang in utter silence? The only possible answer is that they had never heard of it, that in the sources to which they had access it had no place. Matthew tells us that after Jesus' resurrection "the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who

had fallen asleep were raised ; and coming forth out of the tombs, they entered into the holy city, and appeared unto many." Who with any feeling for the historical will care to defend the historicity of such an incident ? Mark begins the story of Jesus with His baptism in Jordan, presumably because he knew nothing of His early life except that He belonged to Nazareth. When we come to Matthew and Luke we are given a marvellous fore-history, which, however beautiful and spiritually true, belongs to the realm of religious phantasy rather than to that of sober fact. As the evidence for Jesus' resurrection, Paul, our earliest and our only first-hand witness, cites the vision of the risen Christ that had been granted to Peter, then to the twelve, then to five hundred brethren at once, then to James, and last of all to himself. Of the empty grave, the attendant angels, the journey to Emmaus, the meal which Christ shared with His disciples—an evident parable of the Supper—the ascension from Olivet, he says nothing. The later the tradition the more numerous and circumstantial do the stories of the risen Christ's intercourse with His disciples become. These stories cannot be regarded as the basis of the Church's faith in a risen Lord, but only as the creation and expression of that faith. Like the fore-history they are not literal fact but rather poetry.

To those who regard doctrine as the fundamental thing in Christianity and one with the Gospel, who build doctrine to a large extent on miracle, and look to Jesus' self-witness as its primary source, these results of modern criticism cannot seem other than shattering. The Gospel narrative will seem to be eviscerated of its most vital content. But where doctrine is treated not as the object of faith, but as its product, the results will be received with more equanimity. If it be asked what there is left

that is worth cherishing, the answer may be given in the words of Harnack.

"The Gospels," Harnack writes, "are weighty because they give us information upon three important points. In the first place, they offer us a plain picture of Jesus' teaching, in regard both to its main features and to its individual application; in the second place, they tell us how His life issued in the service of His vocation; and in the third place, they describe to us the impression which He made upon His disciples and which they transmitted. These are, in fact, three important points; nay, they are the points on which everything turns. It is because we can get a clear view of them that a characteristic picture of Jesus is possible; or, to speak more modestly, that there is some hope for an attempt to understand what His aims were, what He was, and what He signifies for us." [1]

If the theological elements in Jesus' teaching—what He thought about the Messiah, the events that would precede the end of the world, and His own place and office in the apocalyptic drama—will probably always remain in some doubt and obscurity, it is otherwise with the elements that are religious and ethical. It is true that even with respect to these last there are points at which the fidelity of the tradition is not above question. Did Jesus in His denunciation of those who tithe mint and cummin and anise to the neglect of judgment, mercy, and faith, really add the rider, "These ought ye to have done and not to have left the other undone?" or was it added by an editor anxious to guard against the idea that Jesus had disparaged the Law? Is the qualification of the prohibition of divorce in Matt. v. 32 by the words "saving for the cause of fornication" original, or a

[1] *What is Christianity?* p. 31.

later addition? In the third Gospel the emphasis is perhaps so placed as to give to Jesus' teaching a turn in the direction of what one might call socialism. Such uncertainties might legitimately be urged against the attempt to impose the ethic of the Gospels upon the conscience as a code of statutory obligations; but for those who look upon it, not as a *nova lex*, but as the expression of a temper and a life, the highest that has come within our human ken, they hardly enter into account. What Jesus thought about good and evil, God and the soul, the issues of life, the right attitude towards God and our neighbour, is crystal clear. One can say this even in the face of the wide diversity of opinion as to the meaning of the injunction not to resist evil. Read as a law valid under all circumstances, that injunction would convict Jesus Himself of inconsistency. Did He not denounce the Scribes and Pharisees in words that sting like a lash, and threaten sinners with the damnation of hell? But is there any doubt of the spirit Jesus would have us cultivate—the love that forgets self and its rights in the face of a bigger cause, and opposes evil not with evil but with good; the faith that goodness is the ultimate might in the universe, and that by which alone evil can in the last resort be overcome?

It may be remarked that in the case of difficult sayings—"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs," for example—what we inevitably and rightly do is to test them by the conception we have formed of Jesus' teaching as a whole. Either we give to them such an interpretation as will bring them into line with our conception, or, if that is impossible, we doubt their authenticity or, at least, their integrity. This does not, of course, preclude the possibility of error on our part. The interpretation of Jesus' message is a progressive

task, and one in which insight and sympathy count for more than scholarship.

In the teaching of Jesus we have one of the two great direct sources of our knowledge of His personality. Is it not the expression of His inward life, the revelation of what He was? And, despite its fragmentary character, it is, one ventures to say, a marvellously full expression. When we take some word of Jesus into our mind and heart, we are in most real sense brought into contact with Jesus Himself and made to experience His power.

The second direct source of our knowledge of Jesus is the story of His activity in the service of His vocation. It would be too much to say that this story supplies us with the material for a biography. At many points we are left in doubt as to the sequence of events, and there are many gaps. Even the duration of His public ministry cannot be determined with certainty. But one thing the narrative does, and in a most wonderful way, it brings Jesus up before us as He walked among men. It shows us His faith, His love, His hope; the strength of His soul and His unsullied purity. Each incident has its own independent worth, and adds something to the picture. As we read of Jesus' intercourse with the woman who was a sinner, with the centurion, with Zaccheus, with the rich young ruler, with the Scribes and Pharisees, as we listen to His prayer in Gethsemane and follow Him to the judgment-hall and the Cross, the impression of a figure immeasurably great and of infinite significance for our life grows upon us. If His works of mental and bodily healing no longer appeal to us as "signs," they stand, and will stand, as witnesses to the tenderness of His pity and the commanding power of His personality.

To set the teaching and the story of the life over

against each other, as if one was of more consequence than the other, is a proceeding radically false. The two are inseparable, and each in isolation would lose more than half its meaning. Together they give us the image of the Christ and what He stands for; and giving us this, they give us Christianity.

It is an amazing achievement, that of the Gospel writers. In mere booklets, and with nothing but fragmentary material to draw upon, they have written with a vividness that is unsurpassed and with substantial truth, the most momentous chapter in human history.

4. From the element of history we pass to that of doctrine. As we have already tried to make clear, doctrine is a theoretical or speculative construction on a basis of religious experience; and what we have to do at this point is to show the place it occupies first in the Old Testament and then in the New.

In the Old Testament doctrine, though not absent, is comparatively scanty. If the Hebrews had the speculative gift, it remained for long in abeyance. Not until their contact with Greek thought did they attempt anything that can be called a speculative world-view. All we get before that is a number of undeveloped and disconnected conceptions.

Among these conceptions we may include that of creation as an ordered sequence of events, given in the first chapter of Genesis. Although the Genesis account of the entrance of sin and death into the world ministers to a theoretical interest, it represents a type of thinking that is mythological rather than scientific. And the same must be said of the apocalyptic conception of the course of human history, which first comes clearly into view in the Book of Daniel. But in the case of the idea of the Remnant, the vicarious efficacy of undeserved

suffering, and to some extent in that of the Messiah, we are in a distinctly scientific atmosphere. Most familiar of all the Old Testament speculative ideas is that of the Spirit of Yahweh. Inherited from the remote past, this idea was brought into correspondence with the new ethical conception of Yahweh, but in other respects it remained comparatively unchanged.

What has particularly to be noted about these Old Testament ideas is that they were never regarded as articles of faith. No Hebrew or Jewish teacher made it his task to define and expound them so that men should think about them rightly. They were auxiliary ideas, not an integral part of faith's content. And in the teaching of Jesus they occupy the same position.

The immense development of the doctrinal element in Apostolic Christianity is an undeniable fact, however we may account for it. Reading through the Epistles and the Fourth Gospel, we find a doctrine of the person of Christ, of justification or forgiveness, of moral renewal, of eternal life or immortality, of the Holy Spirit, of the Law, of sin, of the Church and the Sacraments, and of many other things. Everywhere philosophical reflection is at work. As compared with the teaching of the Prophets and of Jesus, this enlargement and elaboration of the doctrinal element in religion is something new. And there is another fact the significance of which is still more far reaching. The Gospel itself is cast in a doctrinal mould ; doctrine is taken up into the object of faith, and assent to it made a condition of salvation. Paul describes the gospel of God he was called to proclaim as " concerning His Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Holy Spirit, by the resurrection of the dead " ; and

he declares that whoever confesses with his mouth Jesus as Kyrios and believes in his heart that God has raised Him from the dead, will be saved. For Paul and for the apostolic writers in general, the Gospel is the story of the Incarnation, the Atonement, and the risen Christ's reign as God's vicegerent—in other words, it is a doctrine of the person and work of Jesus.

The legitimacy of this equation has already been discussed, and the conclusion reached, that while doctrine is not to be identified with the Gospel, it can be so charged with its truths as to become its effective medium.[1] That in the great New Testament doctrines the Gospel comes to powerful expression who will question? And it is only to such as are central that assent is required in the name of faith. Both Paul and the author of the letter to the Hebrews draw or assume a distinction between the elementary and fundamental truths which even the babes in Christ must hold and confess, and the higher gnosis or knowledge which is for the perfect. Moreover, the New Testament writers claim and exercise a doctrinal freedom, a liberty of prophesying, which is almost unlimited. Certain points were indeed fixed from the beginning—that Jesus was the Messiah or the Kyrios; that He died for our sins, rose again, and ascended to the right hand of power—but on the basis of these cardinal truths widely different structures are erected. There are, at least, five distinct doctrinal types in the New Testament—that represented by the Synoptic Gospels, the Pauline, the Johannine, that of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and that of the Book of Revelation. A fortunate fact for the advocates of doctrinal liberty. Only in the later books does liberty begin to be circumscribed.

[1] P. 104.

It is a fact worth noting that the more scientific theology or doctrine becomes, the less does it lend itself to be a medium of the Gospel. If the central doctrines of the New Testament can be preached from the pulpit, it is largely for the reason that the categories with which they operate belong to the realm of the imagination rather than to that of scientific thought. It is the imaginative element in them that touches our religious feelings. Paul's story of the self-emptying of the pre-existent Christ is much more moving than the more philosophic account of the procession of the Logos from the transcendent God, and its manifestation in the flesh. Similarly the doctrine of the Atonement is more preachable in what many would call its crude substitutionary form than in that given to it by Grotius or M'Leod Campbell. One may interest a class of students in the Nicene or Chalcedon theology, but hardly a congregation.

5. In almost every religion prediction has played a more or less prominent part. Human beings are interested in what is to happen in the future, and they naturally turn for the satisfaction of their craving to those who claim a special intimacy with the powers that determine destiny, or a special ability to read the intimations given in various natural phenomena. Prediction was one of the outstanding functions of the Hebrew seers who preceded the canonical prophets; and the latter continued their work, but in a fashion that made of it something new.

Prophetic prediction is differentiated from all ethnic forms of the phenomenon by the fact that it is rooted and grounded in an ethical faith. In its essence it is not soothsaying or second sight or miraculous foreknowledge, but stands on a far higher spiritual plane. It is the vision of faith—faith with its eye turned on the future.

Such prediction is seen at its simplest in the application of the principle of recompense. Israel shall go into captivity because she has transgressed the commandments of her God. Closely akin to this is the prediction of a day in the future when judgment having done its work, evil shall disappear, and God shall rule over a renewed earth and a regenerate people. "The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the basilisk's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. . . . I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their hearts will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more." It may well be that dreams of a golden age to come were common to Israel with other peoples; but in any case the prophetic forecast has something more behind it than an ancient tradition or an instinctive optimism—the faith, namely, that the purpose of God with mankind is a purpose of good, and must ultimately get itself fulfilled.

While the Prophets never quite succeed in detaching the triumph of God's cause from the triumph of their own nation, and sometimes, as in Isaiah lx., think of the great consummation as involving for the Gentile world subjection to Israel, their outlook is in principle universal; and not seldom the glorious future promised to Israel is

made to depend on her mission to mediate the knowledge of God to mankind. "It shall come to pass in the latter day that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

The Prophets also venture to predict the means through which the great consummation will be brought to pass Most frequently we hear of a wise and righteous king of the house of David. "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit; and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." That the Prophets should think of a king, and a Davidic king, was natural; although we, with our larger experience, can see that when it is a question of moral reformation, the power of even the best of kings is a very limited quantity indeed. It is more to the purpose that we can credit them with some understanding of the great things God can accomplish through the instrumentality of a God-endowed, God-inspired man, even if, as usually happens, he occupies no official position in Church or State. "A man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Plato had the same intuition. "We must wait," he says, "for one, be it a god or a god-inspired man, who will teach us our religious duties and take away the darkness from our

eyes." In recounting the agencies towards which the Prophets look, the Second Isaiah's conception of the atoning efficacy of undeserved suffering patiently endured must not be forgotten.

In the apocalyptic literature, which opens with the Book of Daniel, and has its Christian representative in the Revelation of St. John, we meet with a type of prediction different in several respects from that of the great Prophets. While the apocalyptic writers have not lost their faith in God, they have ceased to believe in the possibility of any such reformation of the existing world as that towards which the Prophets looked. The Kingdom of God will indeed come, but it will be as a completely new order, and after a catastrophe that has laid the existing order in ruins. It is with the nearness of the end and the various acts of the drama of the last days that apocalyptic prediction has to do. We miss the freedom characteristic of the older prophecy. Its representatives write, not under their own name, but under that of some revered figure of the past, like Enoch, Baruch, St. John; and they feel themselves for the most part bound by a traditional scheme.

Practically all New Testament prediction is of the apocalyptic variety. Paul assumes the rôle of prophet when he assures the Thessalonian Christians, anxious about their friends who have died before Christ's second coming, that those who are alive at the Parousia shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep.[1]

That in their forecasts of the future the Prophets and apocalyptic writers uniformly describe the longed-for consummation as following immediately on God's decisive intervention has often been remarked. And this feature of their outlook has been described as the

[1] Cf. also Matt. xxiv., 2 Tim. 3 ff., R.V.

prophetic foreshortening of history. Its explanation is simple enough. Of our modern idea of a gradual development, an ordered progress from lower to higher, no ancient thinker, whether in Palestine, Greece, or Rome, had any inkling. The triumph of the good could, therefore, present itself in no other way than as a revolution which would set human life once for all on a new and stable basis.

To the explanation we have given of prophetic prediction as a vision of faith, it may be objected that there are elements in it that cannot be accounted for in this way. What of the circumstantial character of not a few of the predictions? Amos foretold an Assyrian invasion, Hosea and Isaiah the fall of Samaria, Isaiah the deliverance from Sennacherib's army, Jeremiah the captivity of Judah and a return after seventy years, and the Second Isaiah that Cyrus would be God's instrument in the restoration. Morover the prophets foretold not only the fate of peoples, but also the varied fortunes of individuals. To Amaziah Amos declared that his wife would be an harlot in the city, his sons and daughters fall by the sword, and that he himself would die in a land that was unclean. And Jeremiah promised a similar fate to Pashur, Ahab the son of Kolaiah, Zedekiah, and Shemaiah. Obviously faith, taken by itself, is insufficient to explain such detailed predictions.

Duhm credits the prophets not only with an intelligent anticipation but also with an instinctive prescience of coming events. Something like the latter Jeremiah seems to describe in his own case. "I am pained," he says, "at my very heart; my heart is disquieted in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. How long shall I see the standard and hear the sound

of the trumpet?" Such premonitions are not unknown, and not by any means infallible. Not all the circumstantial predictions of the Prophets were fulfilled. Ezekiel announced that Nebuchadrezzar would capture Tyre, but, as he himself admits, he was not justified by the event (xxix. 18). And the same has to be said with respect to his prophecy of the reunion of Judah and Ephraim. The Second Isaiah's glowing descriptions of the approaching return of the captives to Jerusalem were, we know, but poorly fulfilled. What gives its vital character and its significance to prophetic prediction is not any element of instinctive prescience it may contain, but the steadfast faith in God in which it is rooted.

Our fathers put the emphasis elsewhere, on the sheer miraculousness of the predictions, and the literal way in which they were fulfilled. Particularly was this so in the case of what is called Messianic prophecy. The Prophets foretold that the coming Saviour would be a scion of the house of David, be born of a virgin, and in the town of Bethlehem, would visit Egypt, live in Nazareth, make a royal entrance into Jerusalem riding on an ass, die for our sins on the cross, be pierced with a spear, and rise from the dead on the third day. In the literal fulfilment of these predictions the older apologetic found supernatural testimony to Jesus' Messianic dignity. Few apologists to-day would care to pursue that line of thought. A more exact knowledge of the Bible has rendered it impossible. But in its place there has come something better. Prophetic prediction appeals to us as an expression of unconquerable faith in God. And we can add that the deepest prophetic intuitions into the ways of God's redemptive working have been fulfilled and more than fulfilled in Jesus.

So much for the first of the three questions regarding

the Bible, that relating to its content. The fundamental thing in the Bible we have found to be its ethical faith. This faith is preached and sung. Further, the traditional conception and apparatus of worship are revised in its light. From the standpoint of faith the great story of Israel and the still greater story of Jesus are written or rewritten. On the basis of faith a system of doctrine is constructed, and from the vantage-ground of faith as from a watch-tower the Prophets scan the future.

The second question has to do with the function of the Bible. What does the Bible offer for our religious need ?

Almost from the beginning of Christianity there has been a strong tendency, inherited from Judaism, to regard the Bible as fundamentally a law-book. This is the view of it taken by the Church of Rome. For Rome it is, primarily at least, the authoritative source of Christian doctrine and morality. Zwingli and Calvin looked at it in the same light. While Luther emphasized the idea that it is a means of grace, he failed to make this idea determinative, and it was soon neglected, if never quite lost. To the question: What do the Scriptures principally teach ? the Shorter Catechism returns the obviously legal answer: " The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man." In other words, the great gift of the Bible is a code of beliefs to which we are bound to conform and a code of morality we are bound to obey.

It is this nomistic conception of the Bible and of the Christian religion that lies behind the doctrine of Inspiration in its traditional form. A legal document must be inerrant, and verbally so, for even trifling mistakes will compromise its authority ; and the doctrine of In-

spiration guards the Bible's inerrancy by invoking a miracle. The modern revolt against the idea of an infallible Bible whose every statement a religious man is under obligation to believe, is a long story which need not be retold. An unbiased study of the Bible reveals the fact that in matters of history it is no more exempt from error than other ancient narratives. Nor can we take refuge in the position that, at least in the vital matters of piety, morality, and doctrine, there is an absence of error and imperfection. The bloody deeds of Jehu which the Book of Kings manifestly approves as a carrying out of the sentence of Heaven, the prophet Hosea condemns in no measured terms (i. 4). Both cannot be right. In some of the Psalms and elsewhere, there are expressions of rancour towards enemies, which, however natural, are in conflict not only with Christian morality, but with the best morality of the time (1 Sam. xv., Ps. cix., cxxxvii.). Uniformly the Psalms cling to the idea of the equivalence of desert and lot, although the Book of Job had shown it to be untenable. Is Mark right in the explanation he gives of Jesus' use of parables in His teaching? Will any one contend that the spirit which the Epistle of Jude exhibits towards heretics is a reflex of that of the Master? The New Testament gives us not one system of doctrine, but several systems, which no ingenuity can harmonize.

We adduce these facts, not as blots on the Bible, but as a sufficient refutation of an impossible theory. And the theory in question is inconsistent, not only with the facts, but with a right understanding of Christianity. Christianity is not, like Judaism and Islam, a nomistic religion. As Paul understood, it is a religion of the Spirit and of freedom. We pervert Christian faith when we turn it into an act of submission to an authority

which must not be questioned, whether that authority be the Church or the Bible. Christian faith is something very different—the free response of the soul to the God who meets and calls it.

The Bible is not an infallible law-book. To use a time-honoured term, it is a means of grace. Its great function is to awaken and nourish faith. And this it does in at least two ways.

In the first place, the Bible brings up before us the great moral realities in which, as we have seen, God is present and active in this world of ours. Justice, mercy, loving-kindness, truth, purity, self-forgetting service, the spiritual might that makes circumstances its minister —these are the facts in our experience that elicit the religious response; and everywhere the Bible holds these facts before our eyes, and, that we may better apprehend their nature, in contrast with their opposites. It holds before our eyes the Kingdom of the good in all its varied aspects, as a law to be obeyed, an end to be achieved, a world-order at once retributive and redemptive, and as embodied in institutions and still more in great personalities. We sum up everything when we say that the Bible holds before our eyes Jesus Christ and Him crucified. That is surely one element, and the greatest in its religious significance and power.

And the second is only a little less vital. Practically everywhere the Bible brings us into touch with a world-conquering faith tested and tried in all the emergencies of our human experience. Through contact with this faith our own is supported and strengthened.

The old doctrine of verbal inspiration has this amount of truth, that the literary qualities of the Bible are also an element in its power. Presented through a poorer

literary medium, the facts would have lost not a little of their appeal.

To what extent is the religious value of the Bible, in the rendering of it we have given, affected by the conclusions of historical criticism? Can we leave criticism free to do its work in the confidence that no established result can touch the basis of our Christian faith, or is there a point at which we must say, "Thus far shalt thou come and no farther"?

Lessing's aphorism that contingent facts of history can never provide a proof for necessary truths of reason is often quoted for the purpose of being refuted. And certainly there is not a little in it to which we must take exception. Its rationalistic conception of religious knowledge must be discounted as antiquated. And if Lessing meant, as however he did not mean, that in human history there is nothing but contingency, that, too, would have to be rejected. But in his central contention that historical knowledge or belief is one thing and religious faith quite another, and that the first cannot provide a "proof" of the second, he is in the right. The question whether an event happened as described, or did not happen, whether, for example, Jesus is an historical figure and was seen alive by His disciples after His crucifixion, can be decided only by historical testimony. It is a matter of weighing evidence, and not at all a matter of faith. To speak of a willingness to accept the historicity of a fact independently of the evidence as faith is a misuse of the term. And even could we by historical evidence establish a miracle, faith would not necessarily follow. Can we forget Jesus' words, "If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead"? Faith has to do, not with the existence of a fact, nor with any

conclusion logically drawn from a fact, but with its value aspect. History, together with our own experience, provides the reality, and it is the function of faith to sit in judgment on that reality. Confronted by Jesus, faith gives its verdict that there God verily meets us, such a reality cannot become the permanent prey of death, "cannot be holden of death"; "He must reign until He hath put all His enemies under His feet." The Divine in Jesus and elsewhere carries with it its own authentication; and our faith stands, not in the testimony any more than in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Within certain limitations, which will be noted presently, the historical facts recorded and religiously interpreted in the Bible are not isolated and absolutely unique, but such as are being continually repeated. The working of God in judgment and in mercy was not confined to Israel, and did not end with the apostolic age. Where the history of Israel differs from that of Egypt, Assyria, or Babylon, is not that God was in the one and not in the other; but that in the first case there were men who were able to interpret it from the standpoint of an ethical faith, and in such fashion as to make the interpretation a world possession. And if we can go back to that interpretation, it is because it is as valid for the events of our own time as for those of long ago. Our modern history, as much as that of the Hebrews, provides material for the man of prophetic gift to tell to the generations to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength and the wondrous works that He hath done. Nay, one can say of the nearer events that they are the more religiously impressive. From all this it is clear that the religious interpretation does not stand or fall with the historicity of any single event narrated in the Bible. We could still believe in a God of redemption

even if the stories of the dividing of the Red Sea and of Jordan turned out to be poetry rather than history.

Our assertion that the events narrated in the Bible are typical rather than solitary is, as we have said, subject to certain reservations. Are there not great utterances the parallel of which we never expect to hear? Another *Iliad*, another *Divine Comedy* may be abstractly possible, but no one looks for them. Even so, there are stretches in the Bible in which the fundamental truths of religion are expressed with a clearness, force, and depth of feeling that guarantee their immortality. That they should be superseded by modern utterances on the same subject is unthinkable. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall never pass away."

And there are also great events or deeds of which the same must be said. We think, above all, of the Cross. In the Cross the whole meaning of Christianity is gathered up as into a burning focus. It is an event that must rivet the attention of all time. Even to contemplate its repetition is felt by the devout soul as blasphemy.

Finally, there are personalities of such significance as to be unique in the sense that they can never be overshadowed by those who come after them. Among such we may safely number the greater Prophets and the Apostle Paul. These men have a religious and ethical quality that must always draw those who hunger for God and righteousness to their side for inspiration and quickening. Sometimes the question is asked whether there may not arise in the future another Jesus, or even a greater than Jesus. The question is foolish, since it admits of no answer. We cannot disprove the possibility; but this we can say, that beyond Jesus we have in the moral and religious domain no outlook. Not

without reason does the Epistle to the Hebrews describe Him as the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

While we do not look for another Jesus, this has to be said, that even Jesus would lose His significance as revelation were there no reality of the same order in the present world in which we move. A devoted man, let us say, goes down to the slums on his errand of mercy. Were the only influence at his command the preaching of Christ, experience shows that his work among the broken earthware would be comparatively resultless. If it is not resultless, the reason surely is that Divine holiness, love, and mercy touch the fallen not only as something they hear of, but as a reality of which, as it shines out in the missionary's life, they have immediate experience. Jesus exercises His saving power not only through the record of His words, deeds, and personality, but also through His spirit reproduced in other lives. Or to state the same truth from another standpoint, God's manifestation of Himself is never an isolated event in the past, not that alone, but always, in addition, an event of the living present ; and the two are inseparable.

One has heard the demand for a new Bible to take the place of the supposedly antiquated Hebrew and Jewish Bible. And a new Bible we in some real sense have, even as we have a present God. Are not writers like Carlyle, Ruskin, and Tolstoy authentic prophets, bearing witness to the working of God in our modern world ? There is no call to depreciate the value of the words that God has spoken to us through modern lips, but to ask us to accept them as a substitute for Scripture is to ask the impossible. In virtue of the incomparable worth of its contents, the Bible occupies a place by itself, and is imperishable. Its teaching has an eternal quality, it brings before us events of eternal and inexhaustible

significance, and it ushers us into the presence of the eternal Master of the human spirit.

Now we approach the last of our three questions. How did such a wonderful book as the Bible come to be written? Here, as in the case of the sacred books of other religions, a miracle has been invoked. Sometimes the sacred writers have been described as mere penmen of the Holy Spirit; and again, when that view has been abandoned as too obviously refuted by the pronounced individuality of their work, the miracle has been modified into one of suggestion and control. While holding by the doctrine of inspiration—too vague a conception to have any scientific value—the Church has never committed itself to any theory as to the way in which the Divine control or suggestion was exercised. For a time it seemed inclined to favour the idea that the writers received their message when in a state of ecstasy; but the excesses of the Montanist movement frightened it out of that position. Happily so, for one has yet to hear of any word worth remembering ever spoken by an ecstatic in the strict sense of the term.

The real mystery is not, as our fathers imagined, a psychological one, how, namely, the Bible writers reached the truths they communicate. *That* the modern study of the development of religious thought, together with modern psychology, have made sufficiently clear. It is in the men—the writers and speakers themselves—that the real mystery lies. Given the men and the rest is intelligible. How account for the fact that on that little plot of ground in the plain of Samaria and the hills of Judah there arose a succession of men who could speak deathless words, and develop a religion that could become a world possession? Some light is thrown on the problem when we take it out of its isolation and

connect it with the general order of Divine Providence. To raise up a people—the Hebrews, the Greeks, the Romans in the ancient world—equipped with a special endowment is God's way of educating the race and enriching its heritage. As Gilbert Murray writes: "The uplifting of man has been the work of a chosen few; a few cities, a few races, a few great ages, have scaled the heights for us and made the upward way easy. And the record in the Grammata is precisely the record of these chosen few." Beyond this in the way of explanation I do not know that we can go. When a Moses, an Elijah, an Amos, an Isaiah, a Jeremiah, and, in the fullness of time, He in whom all these find their crown, appear on this earthly scene, what can we say but that they come from the fathomless reality beneath us, the God from whom and to whom and through whom are all things?

CHAPTER IX

THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

CHRISTIANITY is an historical religion, and the question as to its essence is one of fact. It is not permissible to produce as an answer our own conception of religion; to have any value our answer must be the outcome of a study and understanding of the historical reality.

The attempt to distinguish in the Christian religion between substance and time-form, the permanent and the changing, is a distinctively modern one, and takes the place of the older attempt to establish an external norm or standard by which the Christianity of any age or Church has to be measured. It is prosecuted on the assumption that the latter attempt has ended in failure. In circles where an external standard is accepted, whether it be the Bible or the decrees of the Church, our question has neither relevancy nor meaning. When one is up against an absolute authority, it is idle to talk of kernel and husk, since all is equally binding.

But are we justified in proceeding on the assumption that no authoritative standard is discoverable? That the appeal to such a standard has served the cause of religion in more than one crisis in its history will hardly be denied. In the early centuries it was in large measure the authority of the apostolic tradition preserved in the great central Churches that saved Christianity from the menace of

Gnosticism. And the part which the appeal to the Bible played at the Reformation is known to every one. A religion is commonly purer at its source than in its lower reaches ; and in the New Testament the Reformers found a Christianity relatively free from the intellectual and moral tyranny, the crude sacramentarianism, the legality, and the sacerdotalism for which the Church of Rome had come to stand. It meant much to the Reformers that they had behind them an authority even more august than the Church, a sacred book which Rome itself recognized as, at least, the main source of the Christian faith. And what shall we say of the appeal to Jesus who, by some, has been put in the place of the Church and the Bible as the final authority in religion ? There has never, perhaps, been a time when souls wearied with theological controversy have not found in His simple undogmatic gospel a haven of rest. " Christ," declared Erasmus in his revulsion from Scholastic hairsplitting, " is not a mere name ; He is nothing else than love, simplicity, patience, purity ; He is in brief whatever He teaches. To know Christ is nothing else than to know Virtue."

The witness of Jesus, the witness of the Bible, the witness of the Church at its best will never lose their significance. Always men of faith will return to all three for instruction and inspiration. But while what is great in the past has an undying worth, we make a wrong use of it when, pressing its letter, we turn it into a mechanical and legal norm. There is no historical magnitude of which we can say that it represents timeless truth to which nothing can be added and from which nothing can be omitted without a departure from the faith. That this holds of the creeds of the Church we have already shown. If they have beneath them a

religious experience that is relatively constant, they embody in their structure philosophical conceptions which the lapse of centuries inevitably antiquates. Even the Bible is not wholly proof against the gnawing tooth of time. One thinks of the apocalyptic outlook. The Church quickly lost that fervent expectation of Christ's second coming which was one of the great springs of New Testament piety; and the attempt to revive it has never met with more than a circumscribed and temporary response. One thinks also of the doctrinal element in the New Testament. In its constitution and origin it differs in no respect from that of later ages; and it can be appropriated in its letter only by those who are willing to subscribe to the Jewish and Hellenistic categories in which it moves. Nay, one dares assert that any genuine appropriation of it is a thing impossible. Those who imagine that they are faithful to the letter of New Testament doctrine are self-deceived. There is much in the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity that was not on the horizon in apostolic days; and modern versions of it are still further removed from the primitive germs. If the orthodox theory of the Atonement has affinities with that of Paul, it is far from being an exact copy of it. When we try to think as Paul or the Fourth Evangelist thought, we do so with a difference; and it cannot be otherwise.

Even Jesus was in some sense a child of His time. Mixed up with the eternal in His teaching, there is something, although marvellously little, that is temporal and local. With His generation He expects the end of the world and the appearance of the Son of Man with the clouds of heaven, although it has to be added that He breaks through and transcends this apocalyptic outlook at every turn. With His generation He shares the belief

in a personal devil, in demons as the agents in disease, and in the endless punishment of the wicked in hell-fire. While these conceptions do not affect the religious value of Jesus' teaching—of one and all of them we can say that they are the medium of a truth that is eternal—they stand in the way of an employment of it as a mechanical standard, even if such employment were not forbidden on other grounds.

The attempt to answer the question, What is Christianity? by a reference to an external standard having thus broken down, the problem has to be attacked from another angle. And the modern way of attacking it is, as we have indicated, by discriminating in the historical phenomenon between substance and form, the central and the peripheral, the abiding and the changing. "There are," says Harnack in his famous Berlin Lectures, "only two possibilities here: either the Gospel is in all respects identical with its earliest form, in which case it came with its time and has departed with it; or else it contains something which, under different historical forms, is of permanent validity. The latter is the true view." [1]

The antithesis, it is to be observed, is quite different from that between the true and the false. Measuring Christianity by its handful of universal truths of reason, eighteenth-century Rationalism dismissed whatever went beyond these as mere superstition. But a better understanding of history revealed the radical erroneousness of this way of looking at the matter. The antithesis is not between the true and the false, but, as we have stated it, between substance and time-form.

The validity of this distinction has not, of course, passed unchallenged. It is necessarily challenged by all

[1] *What is Christianity?* pp. 13 f.

who contend for an authoritative norm. We need not point out again the untenableness of their position; but a word may be said in passing regarding the argument developed by Loisy when still a member of the Church of Rome. "Why not," wrote Loisy in his book, *L'Évangile et l'Église*, "find the essence of Christianity in the fullness and totality of its life, which shows movement and variety just because it is life; but in as much as it is life, proceeding from an obviously powerful principle, has grown in accordance with a law which affirms at every step the initial force which may be called the physical essence revealed in all its manifestations? Why should the essence of a tree be held to be but a particle of the seed from which it has sprung, and why should it not be recognized as truly and fully in the complete tree as in the germ? . . . The truly evangelical part of Christianity to-day is not that which has never changed, for in a sense all has changed, but that which in spite of all external changes proceeds from the impulse given by Christ and is inspired by His spirit, serving the same ideal and the same hope." The gist of this argument is that the spirit or soul of the Christian religion and the form or body in which it appears in any age are inseparable, and that any attempt to isolate the one from the other is idle.

The argument is manifestly constructed to buttress the claim of Rome, which can be described by an adaptation of the curt language of Louis XIV. "Christianity? I am Christianity." If it has any philosophical basis, it is to be found in the Hegelian identification of the rational with the actual, a principle to which few, if any, to-day would subscribe. The analogy of which Loisy makes use is utterly misleading. What is true of a living organism like a tree, that it can have only one body in

various stages of development, and that stem, branches, and leaves are inseparable from the life of which they are the manifestation, is far from being true of a spiritual magnitude like Christianity. Christianity has shown itself capable of maintaining itself under diverse forms of Church organization and in alliance with diverse philosophies. And what Jesus contributed was something much more definite than a "powerful principle" or an initial "impulse." We hope to show that the task of disentangling the permanent from the changing is not so impracticable as the French scholar made it out to be.

How shall we proceed? One thinks at once of the comparative or, as it is sometimes called, the historical method. But a little reflection will show that this method taken by itself will hardly lead to any reliable result. Comparing the different forms which Christianity has assumed in any age, one may, no doubt, discover certain features which are common to all and others which are not thus universal; but it would be highly precarious to conclude that the first represent what is essential and the second what is variable. More might be expected from a comparison of the Christianity of different epochs. In the transformations which Christianity has experienced in the course of nineteen centuries, the abiding and the changing must surely stand out unmistakable. And there are matters on which history may seem to have pronounced judgment. It has relegated Millennarianism to the position of a sectarian tenet, and shown that no doctrinal system can remain unaffected by the lapse of time. One must, however, remember that history is not a closed book, and that the verdict of the past may be reversed by that of the future. Moreover, there are vital points which are still in dispute, and which

may have to wait long before history decides on the one side or the other. There is, for example, the question as to the place of dogma. Up to the present the Christianity of the Church has been built upon dogma; but will it always be so?

In his survey of history in the lectures already referred to, Harnack seems to trust to spiritual intuition. "The thing," he writes, "reveals itself. We shall see that the Gospel in the Gospel is something so simple, something that speaks to us with so much power, that it cannot easily be mistaken. No far-reaching directions as to method, no general introductions, are necessary to enable us to find the way to it. No one who possesses a fresh eye to what is alive, and a true feeling for what is really great, can fail to see it and distinguish it from its contemporary integument." This may appear pure subjectivism. May not another with an equally keen sensibility for the living and the great come to a different conclusion from the Berlin professor as to what constitutes the Gospel? The subjectivism is, however, only apparent. What Harnack is really guided by is the Ritschlian analysis, which finds the heart of Christianity in the simple judgments of faith, and relegates doctrine, together with eschatology, to a position of subordination. With this analysis, although he does not explicitly refer to it, his conclusions stand and fall.

An analysis of the Christian religion, and indeed of religion in general, at once logical and genetic, is, we take it, the indispensable preliminary to any attempt to distinguish between what is essential and what is local and temporal. Our analysis, which has affinities with the Ritschlian but is not to be identified with it, is already before the reader, and all that it is necessary to do here is to recall its main results.

At the heart of all religion that needs to be taken into account, all in which an ideal is determinative, we have found two great realities—faith and revelation—the one representing religion on its subjective, the other on its objective side. By faith we mean such a feeling for the ideal values—rationality, beauty, and, more than all, goodness—as leads us to affirm for them, in contrast with other reality that has in itself no value or an inferior one, an absolute significance not only for our human life, but for the universe. Faith is the eternal yea of the soul to the highest that has met it in the field of experience. And revelation can be nothing else than just the values that elicit faith's response. These values are given partly in the material world, but far more in human life and human history. So far as they are ethical they find their supreme embodiment in Jesus.

Values and the heart's response to them constitute, we repeat, the vital core of all spiritual religion. Whatever else there is in religion is secondary and subordinate. The right of doctrine is not disputed ; a certain measure of it is indispensable, and we have shown how it can render to faith a real service. But doctrine is not to be confused with revelation. While it may embody values, the values are prior to and independent of it. It is not the ultimate object of faith, but only its product.

Equally relative is the right of the Church and the Sacraments. The Church and the Sacraments exist to serve faith, and have no other right. The claim often advanced on their behalf of a Divine right, derived not from their utility but from their institution by Christ, rests on bad history and on a radically false conception of revelation.

In determining the essence of any religion we are therefore thrown back on the character of the values it

affirms. In a formal respect all faith is alike: it is a feeling for the ideal values; and what differentiates one faith from another is its value content. Christian faith or piety receives its character from the Christian values; and our task therefore resolves itself into one of describing what these values are.

The most important thing that can be said of Christian values is that they are primarily ethical. It would, of course, be false to say that the rational, æsthetic, or even the pleasure values find no recognition. Passages might easily be quoted from the Bible and other Christian literature that exhibit a profound feeling for wisdom and beauty as elements in the cosmos. And with respect to happiness or blessedness, is it not uniformly regarded as a property of Deity and as belonging to the ideal of human life? At the same time it is not from these values, but from the ethical, that the Christian religion receives its peculiar stamp and colour. The all-determining fact is the primacy of the ethical.

Radically ethical is the Christian conception of God. God is the Power behind conscience, unalterably opposed to evil, the embodiment, source, and guardian of the moral ideal. His great attributes are justice, faithfulness, long-suffering, kindness, mercy, generosity, and the love that pities the lost and goes out to seek and save. The nature basis from which all conceptions of God have sprung is left far beneath. Between the half-ethicized world despot and irresistible fate of the Mohammedan religion and the God and Father of Jesus the distance is great indeed.

We must regard it as fortunate that the Christian conception of God was fully developed religiously before the time came when it was subjected to the influence of philosophy, which is notoriously apt to be more concerned

to reduce the multiplicity of the world to unity and to establish the metaphysical properties of ultimate being than to conserve the moral. The troubling effects of philosophy on the notion of Deity current in the Church are indeed patent enough. When Tertullian speaks of God as "the great supreme, established in eternity, unbegotten, unmade, without beginning, without end," and Hippolytus declares that "there is one God in which we must believe, without beginning, impassible, immortal, doing all things as He wills, in the way He wills and when He wills," when the mystery of the Trinity is put at the heart of religion, there is a manifest shifting of the centre of gravity away from the moral and towards the metaphysical. The same shifting is still more conspicuous in the Catholic adoration of the Host, God being adored not as the eternal goodness that meets us in Jesus, but as a hyper-physical or metaphysical substance present in the sacramental elements. Christian mysticism also proceeds on the assumption that there is a metaphysical depth in the Divine nature beyond good and evil. While these troublings of the Christian conception of God are undeniable, it can be added that throughout the history of the Church the ethical thought of the Prophets and of Jesus has in the main victoriously asserted itself against them. Thanks to the fact we have mentioned, all we can speak of is a very partial and local overshadowing of the ethical.

The primarily ethical character of Christianity is equally visible in its conception of the world-order. At the heart of that conception lies the idea of the Kingdom of God, which is a kingdom of persons in whom the highest values receive the fullest possible realization, and who are united to each other and to God by the bond of love and of a common interest and aim. The

Kingdom of God appears as the supreme end of the world-process to which all God's working in judgment and in mercy, in recompense and in redemption, stand related. So cardinal is this idea that one might employ it as architectonic or regulative for a Christian theology. Its emergence in Zoroastrianism, even if in a rudimentary form, is in itself sufficient proof that Zoroastrianism is on ethical lines; while its absence in Brahmanism, Buddhism, and the Mystery Cults is equally conclusive that these faiths have another basis than the ethical one.

That the values of Christianity are primarily ethical is witnessed also by its piety. To bring out the ethical quality of Christian piety it will be sufficient if we set side by side two or three of its classical expressions or descriptions. "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the high God. Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams or with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" "Trust in the Lord and do good." "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." "If God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith. Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." "I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live: and yet no longer I, but Christ

liveth in me." "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three, and the greatest of these is charity."

In Christian piety, love for God or for Christ is not distinguishable from love for the good; nor trust in God or in Christ from trust in the good as the ultimate might in the universe. The service of God is one and the same thing with the service of goodness and of our neighbour. The pessimism, world-weariness, and asceticism characteristic of Indian religion and to a large extent of Hellenistic are in principle negated. Our earthly life is exhibited, not as empty and vain, or as having worth only in its relation to a life to come; its tasks are eternally worth doing and its goods eternally worth enjoying. Nor is the world viewed as cursed by its materiality, "a desert drear" in which we must roam absent from God. It is God's world, instinct with His presence and cursed only by sin, a world in which we can meet with God and live in fellowship with Him. In historical Christianity, it is true, a pessimistic and ascetic leaven has never been quite absent; but such a leaven is not native to Christianity, but an importation from without.

The Christian religion is radically and consistently ethical, and herein lies its cardinal distinction from all other faiths. Of no other faith that has emerged in history can the same thing be said. Every religion has

conceded some place to the ethical, but only of Christianity is it true that the religious and the ethical are completely fused.

In the ethical character of Christianity every other feature in it that is distinctive has its root. Some of these secondary features may be noted.

1. Distinctive is the fact that the individual is neither submerged in the group nor so detached from it as to make his relation to God a merely private one. The Christian religion is at once individualistic and social.

In the old national religions, including that of the Hebrews, the group was everything, and the individual counted only as a member of it. But throughout the prophetic period, and more especially from the days of Jeremiah, a movement was in progress, the result of which was to awaken in the individual the consciousness of a personal responsibility and worth, and of a personal relation to God. In apocalyptic religion the individual was set solitary before God to answer for his own deeds and to himself receive their reward. It was at the climax of this movement that Jesus appeared, and His teaching everywhere betrays its influence.

For one thing, Jesus' message is addressed to the Jewish people, not as a corporate body, although He looks for a national rally to His cause, but as independent personalities, each of whom holds his fate in his own hands. The individual is of infinite value in the sight of God, and that not as a unit in society, but as a personal being. He is a child of God despite his unworthiness, and God does not willingly consent to lose even one. This estimate has manifestly its ground in the capacity of the individual for moral likeness to and moral fellowship with the Father in heaven. " But love your enemies, and do them good and lend, hoping for nothing again ; and

your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the sons of the Most High : for he is kind toward the unthankful and evil." Kant is true to the Christian standpoint when, in opposition to Greek and Rationalistic intellectualism, he places man's unique dignity and worth in his moral will.

Further, in His appeal to the individual, Jesus sets before him a personal goal and promises him a personal reward. " It cannot be maintained," writes E. F. Scott, " that Jesus aimed at a social reorganization ; much less that He made the social motive the primary one in the moral life. To be sure, He insists continually on the need for service and sacrifice. He requires that as He came Himself not to be ministered unto, but to minister, so His followers must look to the good of others. The suppression of all merely personal interests in the advancement of the larger cause belongs to the very essence of His moral demand. Yet the idea which underlies it is always that, by denying himself, a man gains something for his own soul. ' He that would be the greatest among you, let him be the servant of all.' ' He that is last shall be first.' ' He that loseth his life shall find it.' Blessed are the poor, the meek, the peacemakers, the persecuted, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. The promises of Jesus always come back to some good that will accrue not to mankind as a whole, but to the man himself." [1] In the thought of Jesus, the individual is indeed the instrument of a Divine purpose that transcends his little life ; but he is not a mere instrument to be cast to the void when he has served his use. He is, in Kantian language, " an end in himself."

It is this conception of the incomparable worth of the human soul in God's sight that lies at the basis of

[1] *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus*, p. 60.

the Christian doctrine of immortality, a doctrine in which individualism finds its crown. And, indeed, it is only as we appropriate Jesus' valuation of the soul and His faith in a God who is our Father and Saviour that the doctrine becomes credible. Other stable foundation it has none.

To say that Christianity is individualistic is, however, to state only half the truth. Affirming the individual, it equally affirms the community and the social character of human life. What is the goal and prize it sets before us? Not as in the case of the Mystery Cults a merely private good like a blessed immortality, but a place in the Kingdom of God: "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." Only in and through fellowship with others can such a good be enjoyed. And it is not different when Jesus speaks of the prize as God-likeness and God-sonship. To be like God means that we are kind and merciful and generous, and thus presupposes life in a community. And that we look to God as our Father involves that we regard and treat each other as brethren. In the most intimate religious relation a man cannot separate himself from his kind.

A study of Christian morality leads to the same conclusion. Christian morality is radically social. It is not, indeed, exclusively so; for the individual, as we have seen, is never treated as a mere instrument of social betterment, but always as possessing an independent worth. The personal ideal includes qualities like sincerity, purity of heart, temperance, humility, and trust toward God, that have no immediate social reference. At the same time, Christian morality is not one of self-culture. Never is our duty to our neighbour and to the cause of social righteousness suffered to fall into the background. "If thou bring thy gift to the altar,

and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled with thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." What are the virtues which Jesus and His Apostles exalt to the heavens?—kindness, mercifulness, generosity, the forgiving temper, self-forgetting, self-sacrificing service. And it is on vices like hate, mercilessness, cruelty, selfishness, the exploitation of the weak by the strong that the severest condemnation lights. Religion is summed up by Jesus in the two great commandments, that we love God with all the heart and soul and mind, and that we love our neighbour as ourself; and Paul echoes His words when he declares that love is the fulfilling of the law.

"Jesus," writes Harnack, "laid down no social programme for the suppression of poverty and distress, if by programme we mean a set of definitely prescribed regulations. With economical conditions and contemporary circumstances He did not interfere. Had He become entangled in them, had He given laws which were ever so salutary for Palestine, what would have been gained by it? They would have served the needs of a day, and to-morrow would have become antiquated; to the Gospel they would have been a burden and a source of confusion. . . . And yet no religion, not even Buddhism, ever went to work with such an energetic social message, and so strongly identified itself with that message as we see to be the case in the Gospel. How so? Because the words 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' were spoken in deep earnest; because with these words Jesus turned a light upon all the concrete relations of life, upon the world of hunger, poverty, and misery; because, lastly, He uttered them as a religious, nay, as *the* religious maxim."

The individual and the social aspect of the Christian gospel are not left side by side unrelated. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what shall a man be profited if he shall gain the whole world and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?" The selfish and worldly life is not life but death. Striving to secure all for self, we lose all. Only as we deny ourselves and forget self in the service of God and our neighbour do we truly live. Thereby we become the children of God and inherit the Kingdom. Self-realization comes through self-sacrifice, greatness through service.

All the higher religions have been individualistic, but not all have had in them the seeds of social regeneration. Buddhism perhaps comes nearest to Christianity in the magnitude of the social influence it has exercised. The great and noble-hearted King Asoka who lived in the third century B.C. testified that he had found in it a force that quickened his sense of duty and his devotion to the general good. But if we look for the source of its power we shall find it, not in the system itself, but in the character of its founder. Gautama is one of the great moral figures of the race, and his moral teaching touches at many points a high level. But so far as his system is concerned, the moral figures only as one of the disciplines, and not the culminating one, through which the goal of Nirvana is attained, a goal which, whatever meaning we are to attach to it, has certainly no ethical or social colour. Over man's moral and social activities as over empirical existence in general, the all-devouring pessimism which Gautama

inherited has written the judgment that they are but labour and sorrow. The gentleness and pity inculcated in Buddhism have another basis than the corresponding Christian virtues. They spring, not from a sense of the destination of human beings for God and goodness, but from a sense that all alike are involved in a common lot of misery.

2. Among the distinctive features of the Christian religion we must number a pervasive spirit of freedom, and that notwithstanding the fact that by a large section of the Church this feature is disowned. From the outset of His ministry Jesus set Himself in opposition to the nomistic piety of the Scribes and Pharisees. Obligations that were merely statutory had no sanctity for Him; indeed, He condemned preoccupation with them as tending to withdraw attention and interest from the weightier matters of the law—judgment, mercy, and faith. Practices like fasting, sacrifice, stated prayer, had value only as the expression of an inner mood. While subjection to statutory doctrines did not come up before Him for judgment, it is equally opposed to the genius of His piety. His piety is one of pure inwardness, having to do with the disposition of the heart towards God, righteousness, and our neighbour. It has its law within itself, and is not forced, but spontaneous. When Jesus declares that we are to forgive until seventy times seven, He does not impose a statutory obligation, but rather brings to expression the royal nature of the love that suffers long and is kind. We make a wrong use of the sayings of Jesus when we treat them as binding irrespective of their appeal to the conscience. "Jesus never required that His words should be followed blindly, without our understanding them. It was not the subjection of the servile, but the obedience of the free,

that He prized. The worth of His words in His sight is not in their keeping man in a state of nonage, but in their helping him on into his moral majority and self-dependence. It is not His words at all as such, but the *morally necessary* that must be obeyed, and His words only in case they mirror the morally necessary for us, and in our situation. This is His will; and to obey His will may be to disobey His words." [1]

The idea of Christian liberty was worked out by Paul and given a prominent place in his gospel. With Jesus he refuses to bow before the statutory, and he regards redemption as in one aspect a deliverance from it. Christian service is not the subjection proper to slaves; it is the free obedience of a son. And the Apostle gives a fresh turn to the idea when he insists on the autonomy of the individual conscience. No man has the right to make his conscience a law for another. "Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? To his own lord he standeth or falleth."

Neither Jesus nor Paul contemplates the claim of a sacerdotal order to stand between the soul and God dispensing or withholding God's grace; but this we can say, that such a claim is in polar opposition to the whole tenor of their teaching. Of a mediator between God and man Jesus knows nothing; He directs the soul immediately to God and teaches it to expect everything from His goodness. While apostolic Christianity elevates Jesus to the position of Mediator, it has to be remembered that in practice, if not wholly in theory, Jesus and God are for it indistinguishable. Apostles, prophets, and teachers are ministers of faith, not lords over God's heritage. In this respect also Christianity is a religion of freedom, that it proclaims the priesthood

[1] G. B. Foster, *The Finality of the Christian Religion*, p. 464.

of all believers, guaranteeing to them direct access to their Maker.

3. Along with all the higher religions, Christianity is a religion of redemption. How could it be otherwise considering the loftiness of its ideal of man's life, its deep sense of the misery of his actual situation, and its ethical conception of God? Characteristic of its judgment on the human situation is the fact that it finds the radical evil not in the transience and mortality in which man's life is involved, nor in his entanglement in the material, but in the moral corruption of his heart and will, together with the estrangement from God which is the inevitable concomitant of that corruption. And from this it follows that redemption is fundamentally conceived as moral renewal and reconciliation with the holy God. Man is redeemed into truth and goodness, into Divine fellowship and sonship, and therefore into peace and hope and joy. In a word, he is redeemed into the Kingdom.

How is this redemption to be achieved? Man is not as in Buddhism thrown back on his own resources; *that* the Christian conception of God, were there nothing else, forbids. The God of the Hebrew Prophets, of Jesus, of Paul, and of the Church in general, is not the otiose world-ground of the *Upanishads* nor the changeless monad of Hellenistic speculation; He is the living God who is unceasingly active in human affairs. And in tracing the working of God, the Bible, if it emphasizes His acts of judgment, emphasizes still more strongly His acts of mercy; and one can say that the first are exhibited as preparatory for the second. The moral order of the world, if in one aspect retributive, is in its deepest meaning redemptive. God, declares the great Apostle of the Gentiles, hath concluded all under sin that

He might have mercy upon all. And the same writer is true to the spirit of Christianity when he interprets the significance of Jesus from the redemptive standpoint.

It is in accordance with this conception of the Divine working, and indeed an essential part of it, when the love that stoops to the sinful to forgive and save is singled out as the supreme moral value. Already in Hosea such love is made determinative for the conception of God. In the Old Testament the passages in which it is described and magnified are those which come most readily to our mind: "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercy." It is redeeming love that gives to Jesus' thought of God as Father and Saviour its profoundest content. "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go out after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it upon his shoulders, rejoicing. I say unto you: that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance." And surely the Church did not err when it singled out the love that moved Jesus to His life of service and sacrifice as the central thing in His personality, and when it made His cross the symbol of the Christian faith.

While the idea of redemption belongs to the essence of Christianity, the same cannot be said of the idea of a "completed redemption." The latter is a product of the

attempt to describe, in the categories which the ancient world provided, the difference which the sojourn of Jesus on our earth had made. Jesus disarmed the demons that held man in bondage, carried out a sentence of execution on the sinful flesh, annulled the condemning law by satisfying its claims, divinized our human nature—one and all achievements that did not need to be repeated. Describing the work of Jesus, as we do to-day, in terms of psychology, we can no longer speak of a "once for all." God's redemptive working did not begin with Jesus, nor has it ended with Him. One can, however, say that Jesus accomplished something of tremendous and eternal moment for our human life; and it is really this fact which the idea of a completed redemption brings to expression.

The conception of redemption when thought out inevitably conducts to eschatology. Two questions press themselves upon us—the first relating to the issue for the individual, the second to the issue for the race. In the New Testament, owing to its apocalyptic outlook, the two tend to coalesce, but never quite do so, the idea of a millennial reign of Christ on earth maintaining itself side by side with the idea of a reception of believers into glory at Christ's second coming. For us they are distinct. With respect to the first, it must be said that the belief in a life beyond the grave is so bound up with the Christian conception of God and of the worth of the soul in God's sight that it is not easy to see how it can be regarded as other than an essential. But if this great hope is organic to the Christian faith, the same cannot be asserted of the concrete representations that have been given to it. To treat the pictures of the New Testament as conveying knowledge is to transform poetry into dogma. Is there a future life for all, or only for those

who have reached a certain stage of moral development? Where is the line to be drawn? Will death bring an instantaneous transformation of the worthy into the image of perfection, or must we think of a new theatre of discipline and opportunity? What of the fate of the palpably unworthy? To these questions various answers have been given, but none that follows so directly from Christian principles as to justify us in treating it as part and parcel of the faith.

Hardly less difficult are the questions that emerge when we try to form a concrete picture of the future of the race. Our belief in God's redemptive working carries with it the assurance that it is not the evil in the world, but the good that shall more and more prevail, that the crimes and miseries that have desolated human life in the past shall progressively disappear, and human life become nobler, fuller, and happier. When, however, we seek to give some measure of precision to this general outlook, we find ourselves confronted by a wall of mystery. What form will society have assumed a million or even a thousand years hence? Will the moral situation have been radically altered and goodness have become the spontaneous impulse of the human soul? What will be the end of the human story? The apocalyptic outlook, even when we project it into the remote future, is too evidently mythological to claim authority, and few will venture to formulate a substitute.

In its essence Christianity is not a philosophy essaying an answer to every question, although some sort of philosophy has always been associated with it; it is a faith that can be summed up in a few simple and great affirmations. And in the strength of this faith a man can live his life and perform his task though beset by impenetrable mystery on every hand.

4. Christianity is a monotheistic religion; and this character, like those already considered, has chiefly, if not perhaps exclusively, a moral root. Some sort of monotheism may be, and perhaps has been, developed along exclusively intellectual lines. The mind seeks in the world, or even imposes on it, the unity which it finds within itself; and this leads directly to the idea of the world as the outcome of a single principle. It was in the main an intellectual impulse that lay behind the monotheism of the *Upanishads* and of Hellenistic speculation. The many gods of popular religion were, in both cases, regarded by the philosophically minded either as different names for the same reality, or as different manifestations or potencies of the one eternal source of being. If such an impulse played any part in the evolution of Hebrew monotheism, it was only a minor one. What led the Hebrew Prophets to the belief in Yahweh as Lord of the whole earth beside whom there was no god was their feeling for His ethical attributes. The ethicizing of Yahweh preceded His elevation to sole sovereignty. The universe is at heart moral; and there can be only one moral law, one moral order, and one kingdom of the good. A being representing another reality can have no place beside the God of righteousness.

It is a true instinct that has led the Church to reject every form of radical dualism as heretical. There is, indeed, a dualism that must not and cannot be eliminated—that, namely, between good and evil. Its existence forms one of the immemorial problems. In whatever direction light is sought, no solution is compatible with Christian faith that menaces the conviction that the good is the ultimate might in the universe and must make its way against all resistance.

5. So far in this chapter we have spoken of Jesus only as the primary source of our historical knowledge of what Christianity is. As its founder He must necessarily be regarded as its greatest and most authoritative exponent. But when we have described Jesus as founder and exponent, have we said all there is to be said, or must we, in addition, claim for Him a permanent place in His Gospel? Is the Gospel in some vital way inseparable from Jesus?

The Church may seem to have answered this question with an emphatic affirmative; but, in reality, the relation between the Christian life and the Jesus of history on which it has insisted has for the most part been only indirect and partial. As the object of faith it has set forth, not the historical figure, but His atoning sacrifice and the risen Lord to whom all power has been entrusted, and who rules the world as God's vicegerent. That this preoccupation with the atoning sacrifice and the risen Lord resulted in an overshadowing of the historical figure is a matter of history. And in neither case was the substitution made without loss. Granted that the idea of the Atonement expresses something of Jesus' significance, it assuredly cannot be accepted as a complete expression. And the same must be said of the complementary idea of the living and reigning Christ. So far as its content is concerned, this idea gives only a generalized picture of the historical reality, and cannot for a moment compete with that reality in vividness, significance, and power. Moreover, for our modern ways of thinking it presents difficulties that are insuperable. It is simply not possible to distinguish between the operations of the living Christ and God; and no Christian man tries. The distinction is unreal. The faith that the world is ruled by the living

Christ is one and the same thing with the faith that it is ruled by the God whom Christ revealed ; and the former conception has religious value only as an affirmation of the enduring significance for mankind of Jesus' historical life and death.

In trying to bring to expression the difference which Jesus' sojourn in our world had made, the early Christian thinkers had necessarily to work with the Jewish and Hellenistic categories which the age provided. Among these categories that of personal influence, so prominent in modern theology, hardly figured. The current categories were mythological, legal, or mystical. And so it was that the work of Jesus was thought of as one of disarming demons, abrogating the law by satisfying its claims, cleansing from sin by His blood, divinizing our mortal nature by uniting it with His own Divine nature, and ascending the throne of the world to rule it in the interests of His Kingdom. If such Jewish and Hellenistic categories still find extensive employment, it is because in entering the sacred domain of theology many regard it as a duty to leave behind them their customary ways of thinking.

Modern theology, which dates from Schleiermacher, approaches the question of Jesus' enduring significance from the psychological standpoint. When Schleiermacher claims for Jesus a permanent place in Christianity, it is on psychological grounds. Jesus, he holds, introduced into the world a new type of God-consciousness or piety, thereby becoming our redeemer ; and this piety is propagated through the total impression which His career and character make upon man. The individual becomes a sharer in it through direct contact with Jesus, or through the mediation of the Christian community ; for, as Schleiermacher observes, the re-

presentation of Jesus by the community must be regarded as equivalent to Jesus' own self-presentation. In either case all pious influences are referred to the redemption which Jesus achieved.[1] Unfortunately, Schleiermacher's conception of Christian piety is æsthetic rather than ethical; and on the question how Jesus acts upon men or the Christian community on its members he does not throw any considerable light.

Like his great predecessor, Ritschl insists on the inseparableness of Jesus and His gospel. "The nature of Christianity as a universal religion," he writes, "is such that in the Christian view of the world a definite place is assigned to its historical founder." And he gives two reasons for this assertion. In the first place, it is only through the impulse and direction we receive from Jesus that it is possible for us to enter into His relation to God and to the world—a relation hitherto unknown. Further, Jesus founded His religion with the claim that He brought the final and perfect revelation of God; and whoever has a part in His religion in the way He Himself intended cannot but assert to this claim.[2] What we miss in Ritschl as in Schleiermacher is an exhibition of the psychological grounds on which the dependence of the Christian community on Jesus for its continued vitality can be maintained. It is not enough to speak in general terms of an impulse and direction received from Jesus; and the appeal to Jesus' authority helps us but little. To some extent the lack is made good by Herrmann, who shows how in the last resort it is the fact of Jesus that awakens within us the assurance that God Himself has drawn near to us. "God makes Himself known to us, so that we may

[1] *Der Christliche Glaube*, chap. i. div. iii.
[2] *Justification and Reconciliation*, pp. 385 ff.

recognize Him, through a *fact, on the strength of which we are able to believe on Him.* No doctrine of any kind can do more than tell us how we ought to represent God to ourselves. No doctrine can bring it about that there shall arise in our hearts the full certainty that God actually exists for us; only a fact can inspire such confidence within us. Now we Christians hold that we know only one fact in the whole world which can overcome every doubt of the reality of God, namely, the appearance of Jesus in history, the story of which has been preserved for us in the New Testament. Our certainty of God may be kindled by many other experiences, but has ultimately its firmest basis in the fact that within the realm of history to which we ourselves belong, we encounter the man Jesus as an undoubted reality." [1]

According to Herrmann, therefore, the permanency of Jesus' place in religion is secured by this, that, if He is not the only fact in the world that can beget within us the certainty of God, He is the supreme fact. That position we take to be impregnable; only we shall develop it in our own way.

Socrates raised the question, Can virtue be taught? and, identifying virtue with knowledge, answered it in the affirmative. But for once Socrates was wrong. One does not become virtuous by committing to memory the Ten Commandments, and no more does one become religious by acquiring information about God. In both cases the effective agency is the touch of moral reality. An ethical faith is the response of the soul to the moral as it meets us in the lives of those in whom it manifests itself in something of its purity and power. Face to face with the moral we know that God Himself has come

[1] *Communion with God*, ii. 2.

to us, that it is God who is calling us and laying His hand upon us. Further, the faith of one man finds a support and reinforcement in the faith of another.

Were Jesus' contribution to religion new information about God, then His teaching would be as independent of His person as scientific truth is of its discoverer. But Jesus is not primarily a teacher; He is the power of God—God manifest in the flesh. In Him, as in no other figure of human history, we make experience of the holiness that condemns our sin and the love that refuses to abandon us, the generosity that gives without thought of a recompense and the invincible might of a will that is one with the good. In Him we have an experience of God and of nothing else. And we can add that His world-conquering faith supports and reinforces our feeble faith. Seeking God, and not as a mere idea, but as an indubitable reality among the realities amid which we stand, we find Him as nowhere else in Jesus, hear His high call, and faith is begotten within us.

Experience does not indeed warrant the assertion that without an immediate and direct relation to the historical figure no genuinely Christian life is possible. There are many indirect ways through which Jesus' influence reaches us. It reaches us through the medium of lives in which something of Him has been reproduced, through evangelical doctrine, and through literature saturated with His spirit. Many are His debtors who do not recognize the ultimate source of what is best within them. He is in the spiritual atmosphere we breathe, along doubtless with much else; and we cannot cut ourselves loose from Him even if we would.

That so it is we have reason to thank God. But we should make a huge mistake did we conclude that immediate contact with Jesus is a matter of comparative

indifference. There is a power resident in Jesus, due to the uniqueness of His personality, for which no indirect influence can be a substitute. Precisely those who have taken the higher life most seriously have pressed beyond all mediators into the presence of the Master. Christian preaching has ever found in Him its greatest asset; and it cannot part company with Him without forfeiting much of its power. On a Christianity that loses touch with its Founder, history has pronounced its verdict. "It is not as a mere factor," writes Harnack, "that Jesus is connected with the Gospel; He was its personal realization and its strength, and this He is felt to be still."

One of the chief results of our discussion has been to shift the centre of the Christian religion from doctrines to values. The right of doctrine is not disputed; thinking men are never likely to abandon the attempt to construct on the basis of their faith some kind of coherent system, even if they recognize that every system must be more or less provisional. Our quarrel is not with doctrine in itself, but with the equating of doctrine and revelation, the substituting of the Christ of dogma for the Jesus of history as the object of faith. Christianity is a much simpler thing than the Church has been willing to believe. It is nothing else than trust in the great values for which Jesus stands as that which gives to our human life its meaning and glory and as the ultimate reality in the universe. A careful reading of Jesus' teaching will show that the great bulk of it can be described as pronouncements with respect to true values and false, and affirmations of the cosmic place and right of the true. Blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek, they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the peacemakers, the pure in heart, for they shall inherit

the Kingdom, shall see God, shall be called the children of God. How can we doubt that the centre of Christianity lies there ?

The identification of the Gospel with doctrine has been responsible for some of the gravest evils from which organized Christianity has suffered. One thinks of the recognition of orthodoxy as a virtue, if not the cardinal virtue. Not seldom men have claimed to be disciples of the crucified on no better grounds than that they believed what the Church believed ; and the Church, while it has guarded the moral interest by insisting that works are equally essential with faith, has in some measure admitted the claim.

A still more serious evil for which the identification in question was at least in part responsible was the development of a spirit of intolerance. While there is an intolerance of moral evil that is not the shame but the glory of Christianity, it is not this that has given to religious controversy its peculiar virulence and stained the record of the Church, in so many respects splendid, with bloody persecution. The intolerance which has been the Church's disgrace has had two main roots. As we have indicated, the first is to be found in the treatment of doctrinal belief as that on which heaven and hell depend. From such a standpoint the heretic appears as the deadliest foe of the human race for whom no punishment can be too severe. The second and more potent root has been the exaltation of the Church as an institution above the cause it exists to serve. When the Church is made an end in itself, when it is in effect deified, the temptation is strong not to scrutinize too closely any course that will advance its interests, and to look upon those who menace its peace and security as enemies to be extirpated. For a lover of the

Church it is humiliating to have to confess that the boon of religious toleration came, not from its Christian charity, but from the rationalism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which regarded the Church and its doctrines with indifference or even contempt.

In the early centuries doctrine served as a genuine medium of the Gospel, but the process of speculative elaboration to which it was subjected turned it into an intellectual structure in which evangelical truth was only dimly visible. Long before the Reformation it had to a large extent lost its religious vitality; and the Church lived, not by the preaching of it, but by her worship and her discipline Professional theologians might find a certain satisfaction in contemplating its imposing structure, but for simpler minds assent to it meant little more than a symbol of loyalty and submission to the Church. Earnest piety found its nourishment in a more practical Christianity, or again in mysticism, which, while it did not break with doctrine, soared to a region above it. At the Reformation the traditional dogmas experienced a rejuvenation, since the Reformers weighted them with as large a freight of evangelical ideas as they could carry. But the rejuvenation was only temporary. With the revival of unfettered thought the gulf between the antique categories on which dogma is moulded and those of the modern world became ever more clear; and for some centuries now dogma has been steadily disintegrating. That the majority of Christian people still cling to it need not be made a matter of complaint or regret; for, as we have recognized, such doctrines as the Incarnation and the Atonement, if they are not to be identified with the Gospel, contain it. But for very many dogma, instead of being a help to faith, is a stumbling-block. So far from revealing Jesus it obscures

His features, and hinders from recognizing Him for what He is. In India, China, and Japan the missionary is finding it less hard to win a response to the teaching of Jesus and the story of His life and death than to secure acceptance of the doctrines about Him. Are we to treat doctrine as the essential thing in Christianity, or shall we recognize that the centre lies elsewhere? We need doubtless a new theology that shall correspond with our modern ways of thinking; and not less we need a new understanding of theology's place and function.

Doctrine is not the Gospel; and no more is it the bond of Christian unity. Into any dogmatic system there enters too large an admixture of the speculative to permit of its serving as a genuine rallying-point and symbol for the Church as a whole or even for the separate Churches. Dogmatic systems divide at least as much as they unite. In any case, the profoundest tie that binds men and women together is to be sought not in the domain of the intellect but in the domain of feeling. "A people," says Augustine, "is an assemblage of reasonable beings bound together by a common agreement as to the objects of their love." If we can speak of the Church or the Christian community as in any real sense a single body, the body of Christ, it is because its members are inspired by a common feeling for those high values for which Christ stands, and which He sets at the heart of life and of the universe. Beside this unity, that given by organization, creed, and ritual is but external and trivial. It is what the New Testament has in view when it speaks of the unity of the Spirit, or, again, of one faith. One faith does not essentially mean one doctrinal symbol; it means a common feeling for Christian values.

Such a unity can maintain itself and make itself felt in the face of a multitude of things that divide. Centuries

and millenniums shrivel before it. Not a little in the Epistles of Paul has become to us remote and foreign; but what Christian heart does not kindle when the Apostle sings of the charity that suffers long and is kind, or declares his unconquerable confidence in the love of God in Christ Jesus! The great classics of Christian experience and devotion, whatever their source—the *Confessions of Augustine*, the *Imitation of Christ*, the *Pilgrim's Progress*, Wesley's *Journal*, many of our hymns, not to speak of the Hebrew Psalms—have a catholicity which no doctrinal formula or system can approach. The communion of saints is no figment of a pious imagination, but a fact as real as life and death; and it has its basis in a common feeling with respect to values.

It would be too much to say that the various branches of the Christian Church are in any absolute sense one in faith, and that what keeps them apart are merely matters of doctrine, ritual, and Church government. Between the Roman and the Protestant communions there is, at least, one deep rift in the realm of valuations. Among the cardinal Christian values we have numbered that of freedom. On this value all Protestantism that has remained true to type insists. But Rome has consistently called it in question, and made subjection to the Church a cardinal article of its creed. "Græco-Roman Catholicism," writes Dean Inge in his book, *The Church and the Age*, "is not a religion which could ever have been evolved by free men. Obedience, loyalty, patient endurance, self-devotion, gentle piety, all the virtues of the servile condition—those it could preach and practise. But self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control, truthfulness and honour, fair play and fidelity to obligations, a social conscience and indignation at public crimes,

above all, that intellectual honesty which dreads what Plato calls the lie in the soul even more than the lie on the lips—these never have been, and are not, the virtues which that type of Christianity tends to foster. The typical Catholic has many fine qualities, but, as Newman saw clearly, he is something radically different, down to the roots of his character, from what the Northern European means by a free man and a good citizen." This characterization is not substantially unjust.

There are other valuational divergences, some of them of a minor character, that separate Church from Church. Here we find a preference, partly æsthetic, for a stately, beautiful, or even splendid ritual, and for outward as well as inward reverence in worship. There the stress falls on spontaneity, warmth or even violence of feeling, with a tendency to what a rival would describe as vulgarity. In one case religion is fined down to morality ; in another the moral is overshadowed by the emotional. Nor must we forget that differences in doctrine have sometimes a root in different judgments as to values. Of those who held or hold the Augustinian and Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, it is not unfair to say that they exalt the despotic will of God at the expense of His moral attributes and do violence to our sense of the independent worth of the human soul.

The differences that keep the Churches apart are in many cases neither few nor unimportant. Doubtless there are matters in dispute on which there can be no compromise, and which will have to be fought out. But granting this, can we not still speak of a common Christianity ? That there are books with a catholic appeal is a sufficient proof that we can. Christianity of every shade affirms the eternal worth of our human life, the eternal importance of our human tasks, and among all

life's values gives the primacy to the ethical. And in the main it is the same ethical values that are exalted to the heavens—justice, mercy, kindness, generosity, self-forgetting, self-sacrifice, service of God and our neighbour. Confronted by alien religions like those of India, we become deeply sensible of the unity underlying all our differences. One body in the literal sense the Church may never be ; but with a substantial measure of truth we can speak of one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.

CHAPTER X

THE FINALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

EARLY in its history the Church reached the conviction that the Gospel was not only a new religion distinct from Judaism but also God's complete and final revelation of Himself to mankind. It is true that for a generation or more, so long as a living belief in the revealing office of the Spirit survived, the possibility of fresh developments of Christian truth was entertained, provided these were in line with what had already been received. In the Fourth Gospel Jesus is represented as saying to His disciples that many things which they could not bear to hear from Him then would be revealed to them after His death by the Spirit of truth : "He shall glorify me, for he shall take of mine and shall declare it unto you." But by the time of the Gnostic and Montanist movements the mass of the Church had lost confidence in the Prophets, who offered new oracles at the impulse of the Spirit, and had entrenched itself in the position that Revelation was a closed book, the faith having been delivered once for all unto the saints of the apostolic age.

From this position the Church as a whole has never moved. For Rome, Christian truth, including all that relates to doctrine, sacrament, and organization, is a "deposit" committed to the Church, *quod semper, quod*

ubique, quod ab omnibus creditum est. And the Protestant Churches, while rejecting the unwritten tradition claimed by Rome, have been equally strenuous in maintaining the finality of Holy Scripture. Revealed truth will doubtless find ever new applications, but nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it.

The grounds on which this claim for finality has been based can be stated in a single word, the word "miracle." Unlike our natural and therefore relative knowledge of God, Revelation is no product of human history, but has entered history from the transcendent world. While in history it is not of it; and it has the changelessness of the realm from which it has come. The proof culminates in a demonstration of the transcendence of Jesus and of His dignity as the Word of God, the second Person of the Trinity.

Unfortunately this line of argument has lost much of its old appeal. As commonly presented it proves too much, elevating the letter of apostolic Christianity into a norm for all time. The untenableness of such a position has already been pointed out. In the teaching of Jesus, not to speak of that of His disciples, there are elements that are local and temporal. And in these days miracle is a precarious foundation on which to build. The whole trend of the modern study of the Bible has been to eliminate the miraculous as a factor in the development of its thought and in the course of the events which it narrates, and to substitute in the place of the miraculous historical causes. As much as literature, art, philosophy, and pagan religion, Christianity is a product of history, and at every stage in its evolution historically conditioned. Nor is it possible to show that Jesus appears in history as a visitor from the transcendent world. Our belief in His unique significance is the product, not of any

theoretical proof that He does not belong to the world of time and change, but of our feeling for the eternal values embodied and expressed in His personality and teaching. The finality of the Christian religion no more than its truth can be demonstrated by miracle.

Troeltsch and many more, abandoning altogether the attempt to prove finality, have limited themselves to the less ambitious task of showing that Christianity is the best religion that has so far appeared on the scene.[1] And such a task is surely worth accomplishing. We cannot shut our eyes to rivals in the field that are far from ready to admit their inferiority, or assume without more ado that these have nothing to say for themselves. More than once we have indicated the method that must be followed in ranking religions. It is a matter of comparing values. No follower of Jesus need be anxious as to the outcome of the comparison instituted. One may assert with complete confidence that there is not in any non-Christian religion a single element of permanent worth that is not present in Christianity in a purer form.

To be able to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity over all its rivals is something ; but is it enough ? The nerve of religious certainty would, I take it, be cut were we compelled to entertain the idea that our deepest convictions have after all only a relative right, and that a few centuries or millenniums may see them antiquated. Faith can be content with nothing short of the eternal and absolute : " I know whom I have believed." But how, if, surrendering miracle, we commit Christianity to the stream of evolution, is an argument for finality to be conducted ?

[1] *Die Absolutheit des Christentums und die Religionsgeschichte*, pp. 80 ff.

There are those who employ the idea of evolution to negate anything of the nature of finality. To the changes which evolution may bring, it is declared, no limit can be set. What it has given it can take away. Time, like Saturn, devours its own children. Already Jesus is becoming a dim and remote figure, and a day must arrive when He will have altogether lost His appeal. What evolution teaches us to expect is not anything of which we can say that it is permanent, but endless process and endless change.

Such an interpretation of evolution is, however, quite unwarranted. While the idea may forbid us to think of the world as static, it does not necessarily shut us up to a world that is eternally marching nowhere, and in which no permanent results are ever reached. It is quite consistent with it to construe the time process as a progressive manifestation of the abiding in the changing. Which of the two interpretations is the more tenable one can be decided only by an examination of the course of history in the light of our fundamental judgment as to the meaning of things.

To Hegel we owe the first real attempt to demonstrate the finality of the Christian religion from the evolutionary standpoint. Hegel sets out from a conception of reality as an eternal process in and through which the Absolute, conceived as Spirit or Reason, progressively generates or unfolds in accordance with an immanent logical law the wealth of its content in the world of nature and of history. In nature the Absolute externalizes itself, assumes a form alien to its real nature, but only that it may move forward to a manifestation of itself in man as what it essentially is, namely, self-conscious spirit. Now religion in all its phases is nothing else than the knowledge which the human spirit possesses of its relation to

God or the Absolute. But while all religions seek the unity of the Divine and the human, outside Christianity the Divine is conceived in an inadequate way, as a natural substance, or, higher, as a sublime subject full of wisdom and might. Only the Christian religion has attained to the fully adequate conception, contemplating in the person of Christ the God-man the realized unity of the Divine and the human, and apprehending God as the all-comprehending, all-reconciling substance of existence. Beyond this conception of the human spirit as one with the Absolute, thought cannot rise. It is the ultimate truth about things.

Obviously this proof stands and falls with the Hegelian system. It is valid only if the Hegelian conception of an eternally self-unfolding Reason is the final solution of the world-riddle, and if this solution is one with the Christian. Few to-day would endorse either of these assumptions. If Christianity in common with idealistic philosophy sets spirit at the heart of being, it is not to be identified with any speculative scheme; and, as has already been pointed out, it contains vital elements for which the Hegelian scheme leaves no room.[1]

The essence of the Christian religion is not to be found in any speculative idea; it lies first in its character as a faith which it shares with all the higher religions, and second in the values it singles out as central for our human life and for the universe. In any attempt to establish the finality of Christianity, two questions therefore fall to be considered: Can faith be shown to be the permanent basis of religions? and, Can the great Christian values maintain their claim to be eternal?

With respect to the first question, Edward Caird,

[1] Pp. 92, 170.

following Hegel, maintained that the basis of religion, for an elect number at least, had already been shifted from faith to philosophy. "The whole development," he writes, "of the organic and evolutionary idea of the world as interpreted by idealistic philosophy and applied by criticism to the history of Christianity and other religious systems, has for the first time furnished us with something like a rational proof of a creed which previously rested almost entirely upon the intuition of faith, and which, therefore, was generally mixed up with many elements of unreason."[1] Others, again, have looked to science to supply the new basis. But in both cases the belief or hope is palpably fallacious. Among the most eminent scientists of to-day it is all but universally conceded that the question as to the intrinsic nature of the reality behind the facts of consciousness lies outside the province of science. That philosophy can render to faith material support we have already recognized; but we have also seen that it is itself rooted in faith, and that, viewed as a speculative activity, its hypotheses are not even remotely susceptible of complete logical verification. Sooner or later, recalcitrant facts prove them at least inadequate. Philosophies come and go, but faith abides; and a matter of faith religion must remain to the end of the chapter.

More difficult is the question as to the permanency of the system of Christian values. That concrete values are not absolutely constant must be frankly admitted. Those of the hedonistic class are notoriously variable, both as between different individuals and different generations. One man's meat is another man's poison; and some forms of amusement in which our ancestors delighted have for us lost their savour. While the

[1] *The Evolution of Religion*, vol. ii. p. 321.

values of art are far more constant, here too there is change. The history of music, painting, and literature reveals not only fluctuations in the standard of taste, but also the creation of relatively new forms of æsthetic appeal.

Must the same thing be said of morality? Comparing the ethical teaching of Jesus with that of modern times, there are, at least, two points at which the conflict seems so radical that not a few have seized upon it as a decisive proof that the teaching of Jesus, however beautiful, is, in the world in which we have to live, quite impracticable. First there is Jesus' much-discussed doctrine of non-resistance to evil: "But I say unto you, resist not evil, but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." These words are not to be explained away. Unquestionably Jesus was opposed to the war policy of the zealots, and to seeking redress for injury in the courts of law. While He denounced cruelty, oppression, and the exploitation of the weak by the strong in words of flaming indignation, and believed that a day of reckoning was at hand, He required of His disciples that, renouncing the attempt to enforce their rights, they should meet hatred and injury with gentleness, forbearance, and kindness. The conscience of the modern world, on the other hand, with fair if not with absolute unanimity, justifies, under certain conditions, the use of force, both in war and in the civil administration of justice. While the worth of gentleness, forbearance, and kindness in the face of injury is recognized, there is set side by side with these virtues the temper that prompts us to maintain the right, throw a shield over the weak, and wrest his weapon from the hand of the oppressor.

The conflict is undeniable, but we are not to assume

rashly that it reaches to a substantial difference in moral valuations. In using force, when other means have failed, a government has in view the necessities of organized social life. Nothing can be more certain than that a policy of non-resistance to evil would have as its inevitable result the handing over of the world to the lawless and the dissolution of society into chaos. If the love that renders good for evil is to have a chance to exert its heavenly influence, civil and international order must be maintained, if necessary by the strong hand. But the necessities of an organized society were not at all in Jesus' thoughts. On the apparatus of government He looked with a cold if not a hostile eye; it belonged to an order that would soon be a thing of the past. A new kingdom was on the horizon; and for His disciples there was but one task, to carry out the law of love which was the law of that kingdom.

A precept delivered in view of a situation radically different from that which we have to meet cannot be regarded as unconditionally binding. We can cherish the ideal it enshrines while refusing to treat it as a legal enactment. The ideal and the faith behind it have not, as a matter of fact, changed. Still it is recognized that the love that is patient, gentle, and generous, returning good for evil, is the mightiest force which the world knows, and that in the last resort evil is overcome, not by violence, but only by the appeal of the good.

It is in the same way that we are to look at Jesus' teaching about wealth. While Jesus did not in every case require the surrender of possessions as a condition of discipleship, He nevertheless gave utterance to words about money-making which, if obeyed in their letter, would wreck the fabric of our modern civilization. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth,"

"Take no thought for the morrow"—such precepts are manifestly impracticable under present conditions, or under any conditions likely to obtain in the calculable future. But again we have to say that these conditions lay outside Jesus' thoughts. He was not legislating for men who had to carry on the business of the world, even of the world of His own time; He was setting up an ideal of personal perfection in which nothing entered into account except the moral. And the same fact explains why we do not find in His teaching, or in that of the New Testament, any recognition of the dignity and value of the various vocations or offices of secular life. In the secular work of the world, the New Testament shows little interest. Not till the Reformation was this field presented in the light of an opportunity of worthily exercising our God-given powers and of serving God and our fellow-men.

We cannot ignore the difference in standpoint; but with all confidence we can say that this difference does not involve any real change in our fundamental moral valuations. It is still true that the life is more than meat and the body than raiment, and that it will profit a man little to gain the whole world if he lose his own soul. First the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and after that material needs, is a principle which has not changed nor will change.

Christianity is not a legal code but a system of values. How, under the conditions of our human life, values are to be realized in the fullest possible measure is a problem which each generation must solve for itself.

It is a debatable question whether anything that can be called a new moral value has emerged since Jesus' day. Sometimes the claim has been advanced for the sentiments of chivalry and honour. By chivalry is

meant respect for women—in practice limited to women of a certain rank—the refusal to take even in battle a mean advantage, to protect the weak, and wage an incessant war on cruelty ; and by honour, fidelity to one's word, to resent an insult, especially an insult to friends and to any lady, and to prefer death to dishonour.[1] But even if we admit that these two sentiments were unknown to the Greek and the Jew and to early Christianity, and were a gift from the Teutonic race, the admission does nothing to cast doubt on the finality of the Christian system of values considered as a whole. Their incorporation involves no radical change, and there is no genuine moral value which Christianity cannot appropriate and as it were baptize. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." In these words the Apostle Paul offers hospitality to the great and true whatever its source or whenever it shall present itself.

The fact, however, is that values, expressing as they do the essence of our human nature, have immense stability. We can speak with all confidence of final results. In literature, art, and music there are achievements that are permanent. New masterpieces there will doubtless be, but they will hardly antiquate and reduce to meaninglessness the old. Hoeffding's contention that the future may alter our present system of values beyond recognition, and that there is no system in the conservation of which we can believe, is a piece of gratuitous scepticism without any basis in experience.

[1] Gardner, *The Growth of Christianity*, pp. 208 ff.

And Nietzsche's proposal for a transvaluation of all moral values has already ended in smoke.

In historical Christianity there are not a few elements that have changed in the past and will change doubtless in the future. No system of doctrine can stand indefinitely. Nor are sacraments, being relative to an end, above the reach of change. Nor are systems of Church government. To claim a Divine right for Presbyters or Bishops after the claim has been abandoned by all the world in the case of kings, requires no small amount of courage and something perhaps of intellectual unveracity. Finally we may expect that new ways and methods for a fuller realization of Christian values will be struck out.

But that there will be a permanent falling away from or an advance beyond the great sanctities—justice, mercy, faithfulness, the love that gives and serves with royal generosity—which Christianity sets at the heart of life and of the universe, is unthinkable. If we cannot trust our perceptions that there we are in the presence of eternal reality, we can trust them nowhere. And it is because Jesus stands, not for doctrine, Church, or sacrament, but for these eternities and for faith in them, that we can say of Him as of none other, that He is the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

CHAPTER XI

RELIGION'S RIGHT AND VALUE

THE right and value of morality no one seriously disputes. Morality is too obviously an integral part of our human life, and the consequences of its decay both for the individual and the community are too obviously disastrous to allow doubt to gain a footing. But in the case of religion it is otherwise. Many to-day are ready to dismiss religion as a form of culture that has been left behind in the march of the race. It is a survival, we are told, of the primitive animistic way of looking at things, or it rests on an illegitimate elevation of our desires and wishes into a law for the universe. The field it claims has been occupied by science. And it will not be missed. Morality can stand without its support, and will, indeed, be stronger and purer by the dissolution of the traditional alliance. Not a few who are unwilling to part with the name really break with the thing by reducing religion to purely moral terms—devotion to social welfare and the like. Religion to-day does not pass unchallenged, but is required to produce its credentials.

A distinction must be drawn between the two questions of the right of religion and its value, and the primacy given to the first. Religion is not fundamentally a means to an end beyond itself, even were that end so important a one as morality. As much as morality,

science, and art it claims to exist on its own account. And, indeed, it is not possible to obtain it on any other terms. No one ever became religious as the direct result of a calculation of the accruing advantages, although such a calculation may perhaps turn one's thoughts to religion. Nor can we will ourselves into it: it is created, not by the fiat of the will, but by the touch of the Divine. To have vindicated its immediacy and independence was not the least of Schleiermacher's memorable services to a scientific theology.

When we speak of the right of religious faith, we mean that it does not involve us in demonstrable contradiction with fact, and that it is not a morbid or childish or outgrown reaction to reality, but one that is integral to our human nature at its highest and best. Could an irrefragable proof be given that at the heart of being there is nothing august or sacred, and that spirit and its high values so far from having any habitation in eternity are but chance and ephemeral products of what is cold and dead, faith would, of course, perish. But there is not the slightest risk that such a proof will ever be produced. The materialism and naturalism that were so aggressive throughout the nineteenth century are hardly any longer a menace. The most eminent representatives of present-day science are almost at one in recognizing the inability of science to provide any solution of the ultimate problems, and, therefore, in leaving the field open for religion. Religion is, at least, not barred.

In establishing the title of religion to be regarded as an essential function of our human nature it has been customary to appeal to its universality. Religion, it has been urged, is a phenomenon co-extensive with the human race, no people quite destitute of it having so

far been discovered. If certain tribes of low culture have seemed to form exceptions, more careful investigation has invariably corrected the first hasty impression. While there are individuals who have little or no feeling for religion, as there are individuals who have little or no feeling for beauty or for music or even for logic, the race as a whole is " incurably religious."

All this is probably true, but it does not carry us far. In the religion of preliterate peoples there is little indeed that corresponds with what we mean by the term, hardly more than certain natural emotions like awe and the sense of dependence. Any religion we are concerned to defend is rooted in faith ; and for anything more than faint adumbrations of faith we shall ransack the more primitive phenomena in vain.

Nor is very much to be gained by appealing to civilized man in the mass. No doubt in most lives there are occasional ebullitions of natural religion in the presence of danger or of death, and what is more, some genuine moral feeling, which is the soil from which faith springs. But it must be confessed that faith, though perhaps more common than we imagine, is not exactly an obtrusive phenomenon even among churchgoers. If, therefore, we are to speak of the universality of religion, it cannot be in any statistical sense of the term. A mere counting of heads, were the enterprise possible, would scarcely yield any definite conclusion. Rather must our appeal be to those who, by the largeness of their minds and the greatness of their hearts, have some real title to stand as the representatives of humanity. The result of such an appeal no believer in religion need fear.

We begin with the pioneers and heroes of religious faith—the Hebrew prophets, Zoroaster, Socrates, Paul, Augustine, St. Francis, Luther, and many another to

mention whom time would fail. Than these men earth has seen none nobler. By the force of their minds, the purity and elevation of their motives, the strength of their character, their burning moral earnestness, they tower above the ordinary level. Where, if not here, shall we listen for the witness of humanity? And there is one whom we name apart. Whatever more we can say about Jesus, He is at least the sublimest figure in all history. In Him, surely, the deepest and the highest in our human nature come to expression. In a profounder sense than the apocalyptic we can describe Him as the Son of Man.

On the side of faith are ranged also, almost without exception, the greatest thinkers of all times and all lands. Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus may speak for Greek philosophy; Lotze and Confucius for that of China; and the Upanishad writers for that of India. The last have a very different conception of ultimate reality from the Christian, but placing as they do what appeals to them as the highest at the centre of things, we are entitled to inscribe their names on the muster-roll of faith. Coming down to modern times, we can appeal to Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Kant, Fichte, and Hegel. These all, though no doubt in different fashion, give to the world a spiritual interpretation. Not a single philosopher of the first rank—Schopenhauer can hardly be described as such—is on the naturalistic side. In spite of his sceptical critique of human knowledge, it is highly doubtful whether Hume really rejected a belief in God.

The witness of the great poets is not different from that of the great thinkers. In Homer, no doubt, the gods are largely of the nature of literary machinery; but when in the opening lines of the *Iliad* he declares that

the will of Zeus must be accomplished, he is expressing a real conviction, and one that plants some kind of justice at the heart of things. The work of the Greek tragedians is inspired by the belief that behind the sad confusions of our earthly life there is an order, could one only discover it, that is rational and moral. While Shakespeare does not play the part of a religious or moral teacher, there can be no doubt as to where he stands. The world of his tragedies is one in which the law of retribution is at work—" This even-handed justice commends the ingredients of our poisoned chalice to our own lips "—and also, more particularly in the later plays, the law of mercy. That the poetry of Dante, Milton, Goethe, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning is rooted in religious faith requires no proof. And the same is true of the writings of Carlyle, Emerson, Ruskin, and Tolstoy. With few exceptions, indeed, the immortals are on the side, not of unbelief, but of belief.

While this so impressive fact does not prove that a spiritual interpretation of the world is true, it certainly does show that the impulse behind it proceeds from what is deepest, noblest, and most universal in our human nature, and that the race as a whole is little likely to move from it.

The question may be raised why, in the case of so many whom we cannot accuse of worldliness and moral indifference, the religious appeal should meet with apparent insensibility. It is, no doubt, a partial answer to say that religious sensibility, like artistic and musical, varies in different individuals from an all-absorbing passion down almost to zero. And in all three cases we may interpret the variation as meaning that the genius or specialist receives his gift that he may pass it on to others more meagrely endowed. It is God's

way of elevating the standard and enriching the heritage of the race.

But this is far from being a full account of the matter. Many have been alienated from religion by the fact that they have met with it only in unlovely forms or in combination with doctrines which they have found incredible. Their scepticism—we think of that of Lucretius—has been a protest not so much against religion in its essence, as against some current phase of it. It is of the first importance that the issue be set before men in its simplicity, whether this great universe is to be interpreted from the standpoint of that which is highest in our experience or of that which is lowest, whether it is to its burning centre the habitation of wisdom and beauty, of justice, love, and truth, or a stupendous piece of mere dead machinery. Are the supreme values so august for us, so sacred, so eternal in their nature, that we dare to commit our life to them and establish them on the world's throne ?

There is another fact on which faith has not infrequently suffered shipwreck. It is the apparent indifference of nature's order to human life and its high values. In his book, *Mysticism and Logic*, Bertrand Russell gives forceful expression to a scepticism which has this as its source. " Brief and powerless," he writes, " is man's life : on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way ; for man, condemned to-day to lose his dearest, to-morrow himself to pass through the gates of darkness, it remains only to cherish, ere yet the blow falls, the lofty thoughts that ennoble his little day ; disdaining the coward terrors of the slave of fate, to worship at the shrine that his own hands have built ;

undismayed by the empire of chance, to preserve a mind free from the wanton tyranny that rules his outward life ; proudly defiant of the irresistible forces that tolerate, for a moment, his knowledge and his condemnation, to sustain alone, a weary but unyielding Atlas, the world that his own ideals have fashioned despite the trampling march of unconscious power."

This passage is instinct with religious feeling, or at least with that feeling for the ideal values in their contrast with what has in itself no value from which faith is born. But faith falls back baffled in the face of what seem hard and intractable facts that proclaim its nullity, and the writer resigns himself to the idea of a world in which he is a stranger and a rebel. We shall not ask whether the facts may not be less intractable than they appear, and capable of an interpretation which is not at war with religion. Admittedly faith has always had to struggle with enigmas incapable of anything like a complete theoretical solution ; but so far from ignoring these enigmas, the heroes of faith have sounded their depths, and in the face of them have hurled their grand affirmation : " I know, all appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, I know that my Redeemer liveth."

From the question of religion's right we turn to that of its value. However unquestionable its independence, religion can hardly refuse the test of results. Could it be shown that it has weakened rather than strengthened our moral energies, produced more hatred and strife than love and unity, degraded rather than ennobled, diminished rather than increased the sum of human happiness, it could scarcely maintain itself indefinitely. " By their fruits ye shall know them," applies to religion as to everything else.

We shall not attempt to prove by a survey of history

that empirical religion has, on the whole, been productive of more good than evil. To muster on the one side all the miseries and atrocities for which it has been responsible—*Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum*—and on the other all the boons it has bestowed, and to strike the balance, is a task that defies human knowledge and wit. Here we take religion to mean faith in the sense in which we have defined it; and obviously it has not been such faith, but other ideas and passions associated with it, although alien to it, that have been the mother of human sacrifices, superstitious terrors, remorseless persecutions, and sectarian ambitions and malignities. Can we go further and say that in faith we have a support and reinforcement of what is noblest and fairest in human life, the loss of which would be an unspeakable calamity? Most important is the question of its influence on morality.

That morality is dependent on religion for its basis and would collapse with it can hardly be claimed. Not until morality had emerged with its own independent right could religion ally itself with it. It is true that the noblest morality has come into existence in association with religion, but this is because the pioneers in religion, like the Hebrew Prophets, have also been men of delicate and profound moral feeling. From the days of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, ethical thinkers have been engaged in the task of establishing morality on a basis of its own, grounding it in the nature of man as a social being and as compounded of reason and passion. How, then, is religion's contribution to be described?

Dominated in his thinking by eighteenth-century rationalism, Paley, at one time famous as an apologist for Christianity, taught that what religion contributes to morality are two supernatural sanctions of tremendous

force—the sanctions of heaven and hell. The hope of future reward, he held, and the fear of future punishment are powerful motives to a moral life—motives without which morality would hardly be able to maintain itself. We need not stop to inquire how far these motives are operative in our modern world. Granting their activity, what they would foster would not be a genuine but only a prudential morality. Genuine goodness has another spring than hope and fear ; it is rooted in love, and is virtue for virtue's sake. Moreover, it is surely a caricature of religion to sum it up in a belief in heaven and hell.

If religion cannot be said to add a specifically new motive for moral obedience, what does it contribute ? It connects the moral with eternity, establishes it at the centre of being, and so doing invests it with a new majesty and security.

Bertrand Russell's reflections already quoted, on the pitiful brevity, powerlessness, and insignificance of man's life viewed against the background of the material immensities and eternities, will occur to every thoughtful mind that contemplates the idea of a world without God. What would be their ultimate effect on our attitude towards our moral tasks and ideals ? Would we continue to hold these high, cherishing them and making sacrifices for them, in the face of an indifferent universe that would soon devour them and us ? One may be permitted to doubt. In the long run, if not at once, would not the consciousness of the nothingness of the spiritual as compared with the material and of the ultimate bootlessness of human striving sap courage and energy, and even lead to serious questioning of the worth of the spiritual ? The nobler sort of men might not conclude, " Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," but the logic of the situation would be all in that direction.

Certain it is that in the past the belief that the call of conscience is the call of God, and the Kingdom of the good the Kingdom of God, has clothed duty with sacredness and grandeur, adding incalculably to the force of its appeal. Certain it is that in their fight with evil and their struggle for the good and the true, the noblest moral figures of the race have found in the conviction that God was behind them, and that the cause was His, courage and strength. One can think of situations in which without this conviction fidelity would seem barely possible.

And there is another point. One cannot but respect the strength of mind that seeks its resources within itself, and professes itself ready to stand by the ideal in defiance of an indifferent or hostile universe. At the same time, it is as certain as anything can be that rebellion against our environment is a source not of strength, but of inner distraction and weakness. The futility of such rebellion is too evident; and sooner or later it would wear the human spirit down. Not in this way has the world been overcome, but by the victory of faith. When we can believe in light behind all the mystery that surrounds us, in good behind all evil, in wisdom behind all that perplexes and baffles us, we can accept much that is hard to bear, and do our best and bravest under the unalterable necessities. In reconciling us with our world environment, religion brings a peace and security that are powerful factors in the moral life.

A logically cogent proof of the ultimate dependence of the moral life of religion we cannot bring. In matters of faith, logical demonstration is nowhere attainable. In the past, morality has had the support of religion; and an experiment on the large scale of dispensing with that support will, we believe, never be made. That

individuals are able to dispense with it proves little; for the individual is always more or less dependent on his social environment. At the same time, history is not altogether neutral on the question. Is it not a fact that the great movements that have carried morality to a higher level have one and all had religion at the heart of them? We think of the prophetic movement in Israel, of early Christianity, of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, and of the Wesleyan revival in England. The religious appeal stirs the depths of human nature as no merely ethical one is able to do. There are ethical societies that teach a morality divorced from religion, but one has never heard of any conspicuous results from their activities. Nor has the Russian experiment so far yielded much that is admirable.

There are other departments of culture besides morality—music, art, literature—which in the past have felt the touch of religion and would be affected by its decay. Music and art are, of course, independent values, existing in their own right; and there is a truth in the cry, "Art for art's sake." What is more, they are independent in the sense that keen feeling for them is compatible with a very slender modicum of morality or even of intelligence. And if in music and art there were nothing more than harmony of sound and harmony of colour and line, both would, still further, be independent of ideas and even of passions outside those specifically æsthetic. But the last species of independence cannot for a moment be admitted, notwithstanding the claim of certain modern schools of painting. However music is related to ideas, it certainly undertakes to express in its own fashion the whole gamut of human passion or emotion. And some of the very grandest music ever composed has religious emotion as its inspiration and

theme; naturally so, since such emotion represents the human soul in the heights and depths of its experience. Its disappearance would not leave music bankrupt; we should still have our jazz and much more; but there would be a blank which nothing else could fill.

With respect to painting, it must be admitted that it is possible to have pictures that limit themselves to a purely æsthetic appeal. But the highest art is not thus limited. If it does not always or often tell a story, it expresses the range of fine emotion and great ideas. And the contribution of religion to art consists just in supplying such emotions and ideas. Whatever one may think of the truth of this contribution, one will hardly question its sublimity, or that its elimination would leave art infinitely poorer. One remembers the vanished Zeus of Phidias, the Venus of Milo, Michael Angelo's Moses and his Sistine Chapel frescoes, Angelico's frescoes in the San Marco, and Raphael's Madonna San Sisto. Even Landscape, as Turner and Millet show, can convey the impression of "something far more deeply interfused." [1]

Still more devastating in its effects would be the elimination of religion from philosophy and literature. All great philosophy from Plato downwards, not excluding that of India, has, as we have shown, an element of faith at the heart of it; and it is this fact that gives it its chief grandeur and appeal. Divorced from faith, speculation descends, as could be illustrated by certain modern systems, into a mere exhibition of monkey agility in the intellectual line. All that would be left to us would be one or other form of naturalism.

Poetry would, no doubt, suffer less, for the larger part of its field would still remain; and yet the blank

[1] J. R. Cameron, *The Renascence of Jesus*, pp. 104 ff.

would be portentous enough. Not only have the greatest poets been on the side of faith ; it has been in singing its spacious ideas and intuitions that they have touched the highest pinnacle of inspiration.

Sometimes stress is laid on faith, and not without reason, as a spring of inner peace and happiness. In reconciling a man to the circumstances of his life when these are hard, and to that last circumstance which we have all to face, it removes one pregnant source of anxiety and dispeace. And there is a joy of elevated thoughts which counts for much in the sum of human felicity. The Psalmist surely is near the truth when he sings : " The Lord reigneth ; let the earth rejoice ; let the multitude of the isles be glad."

What we have tried to say on this subject of religion's right and value is all summed up in the words of Augustine : " I will seek Thee that my soul may live ; my body liveth by my soul, and my soul by Thee." To love and possess God is to love and possess truth, beauty, and goodness, and to know and feel that on these realities the universe is founded is to have religion. What, then, were our human life apart from God and from faith in God ? " I will seek Thee that my soul may live."

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